

Two Worlds, One Family

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Summary: Hiccup, now the leader of Berk, starts to build a new family with the people he loves most. SPOILERS for HTTYD2.

## 1. Three Halves

Two Worlds, One Family

A DreamWorks' How to Train Your Dragon fanfic series by Raberba girl

Summary: After the great dragon war, Hiccup starts to build a new family with the people he loves most.

\*\*A/N: SPOILERS SPOILERS SPOILERS for HTTYD2.\*\*

\*\*Some parts of this fic also make more sense if you've read my \*\*\_Dragon Queen of Berk\_\*\* stories, even though the two series take place in slightly different universes.\*\*

Introduction: This branch of my HTTYD headcanon, which occasionally may or may not use my "dragon queen" headcanon, is based on my ideas for what Hiccup's family is like post-HTTYD2. I got these ideas before actually watching HTTYD2. I learned later that Valka is forty years old in HTTYD2, which makes it possible but still a stretch for her to successfully have another kid, especially in that time period; and when I actually watched HTTYD2, I saw that unfortunately, she and Stoick never even really had a chance to, erm, make another kid at all. \*sweatdrop\*

BUT I STILL REALLY LIKE THE HEADCANON, so...suspension of disbelief, plz...? ^\_^; We'll pretend it took an extra day or two for Drago's army to reach the dragon sanctuary...

This is going to be like my Stepsiblings series in that it's a

bunch of one-shots connected by the same or a similar premise.

\*\*Three Halves (rough draft)\*\*

Summary: Hiccup & Astrid's wedding from Toothless's POV.

I'm going to attach this fic to prompt 3 of my HTTYD challenge. If you're not reading this on FFN, you can find my challenge here:  
mychallenges#httyd

(If you are on FFN, then go to my profile, click on the link to my Web site, and look for it there.)

o.o.o

Something changed. I'm looking in my memories and I think it started that time when Hiccup said something to Astrid and then they both started flaring out joy and excitement and happiness like the two of them were a small sun together.

I didn't think it was important, because humans are always throwing out strong emotions like that; but then it started spreading through the rest of the nest. Excitement and happiness, stronger and stronger as time went on, and they were all busy like ants. Hiccup and Astrid started making more of what I think are human courtship signals, too.

Are they finally finally FINALLY going to finish their courtship and become actual mates? They courted for YEARS. Cloudjumper told me how short humans live and I couldn't believe it, if their lives are THAT short then how do they reproduce at all when their courtships take sooooooo long and their litters are sooooooo small?!

Sometimes I think I will never understand humans.

I like them, though. That is what I think as I lie on my bed and watch Hiccup and Fishlegs fussing with His outer skins. I like humans because I love Hiccup so much and Hiccup was what made me like the others.

I really very much love Him, but...sometimes I think I will never understand Him. He changes over and over again, smelling like excitement and worry and fear and frustration and anxiety and happiness, throwing skins down and putting on other skins and then taking them off again and throwing them down and grabbing some skins he already tried off the ground and putting them on again and smelling more frustrated than ever.

"...but I mean, am I supposed to wear what looks best or what's made best, because you'd think- And it doesn't even matter anyway, because this one's got rips from when those Terrors got trapped in that fish net, and the other one's all scorched from when Stormfly was sick, and I don't even know if Astrid cares because she's always confusing me, acting like a guy half the time but then acting girly when I'm not expecting it, and does it even matter what she cares about or are we supposed to go with tradition, or-?"

"Hiccup, you're gonna be wearing the cloak over it, anyway, I don't

think most people are going to notice the clothes underneath."

"Yeah...\_yeah\_, right? Right...?" \_"Relief, worry."\_ "Here, help me with the clasps in the back..."

I don't like when He's upset. I get up and nuzzle Him so He'll get distracted and play with me and get happy again.

I'm glad when He bares His teeth in a smile. I don't understand how humans look less threatening when they do that instead of more, but humans are always strange about pretty much everything. "Hey, bud... What do you think? You think I look like a great catch and she couldn't have possibly done better?" \_"Hope worry self-deprecation."\_

\_ "I'm pretty sure You're worried about something pointless again,"\_ I tell Him. \_"Let's go flying. That always makes You feel better."\_

"Heh...not now, Toothless, we've got a wedding to get to...a really, really important one..."

"Here you go, chief." Fishlegs smells happy and proud and just the smallest bit sad when he holds up the big fur that smells like Dad.

Hiccup stares at it for a minute, going quiet and still and sad, and also just a tiny bit happy underneath. I think He is thinking about Dad, too. Then He turns around and lets Fishlegs put the fur on Him. The fur looks like an animal that's swallowing Him.

"I always feel ridiculous wearing this thing..."

"Well, it doesn't help that you always hunch over when you wear it. Straighten up your shoulders- There, see? Much better."

Hiccup looks down at Himself, slowly rubbing the edge of the fur in one paw, and I can almost see Him thinking, \_'Dad, Dad, Dad.'\_

\_ "I am very, very sorry,"\_ I tell Him. I hate when He thinks about Dad because I always feel like there's a blade in my heart and I can never do anything to make it stop hurting until Hiccup is happy again.

"What an impressive chief I make..." Hiccup sighs, then smiles at me. "Well...come on, Toothless. Ready to watch me make an idiot of myself in front of the whole village?"

Fishlegs laughs. "Oh, come on, chief, you always think you're worse than you actually are."

"Meaning I'm not as much of a screw-up as I think I am?"

"Oh, you know what I meant, Hiccup."

I nudge Hiccup until He scratches the sweet places on my head. \_"Feel better,"\_ I tell Him.\_ "Tell me what I can do to make it better."\_ Except there's a lot of happiness floating down under all His worry and fear. I don't understaaaaand...

The other troop males come bursting into the cave as we're coming down, Snotlout and Tuffnut being even louder and more gleeful than usual and making Hiccup feel embarrassed and angry, with that weird happiness getting stronger at the same time for some reason.

"Seriously, SHUT UP, Astrid would shove a spear up your nose if she heard you say that...!"

ALL the humans in our flock are gathered outside, making a lot of noise and smelling so unbearably happy and excited and amused that I almost sneeze. What is happening? Why is everything so different today?

Astrid's coming from her cave to join us with Stormfly and Ruffnut beside her, and she looks different like Hiccup does, bigger and sweeter and excited and a little nervous but not nearly as nervous as He is. Her scent floats across my nose and it's like the human equivalent of being in heat, I keep expecting her to pounce on Hiccup and finally mate with Him, and I keep being a little surprised when she doesn't. Humans always hide to mate, maybe that's why. But then why is everyone here? Is this why the entire flock is gathered, because of Hiccup and Astrid? Humans always ignore important things and then make such a fuss over silly things.

I am soooooo confused, but I watch Hiccup and follow Him. SO MUCH SOUND-TALKING, and lots of mark-making that I really really wish I understood because I think they talk with those charcoal streaks too and I want to understand what they're saying. More sound-talking, SO MUCH. They're pulling furry animals around and throwing stuff that smells like fruit and giving each other blades and tiny bits of metal.

The only reason I don't lie down and nap is because Mom is explaining to us sometimes, and that helps. "He pledges gifts to his mate, and she to him... They ask for bounty and protection... They give representations of themselves to each other, so as to hold each other in safekeeping..."

"Human mating is so complicated," Meatlug sighs.

"Just make 'babies' now so we can go eat!" Hookfang complains. "I smell FOOD. They have FOOD in the Big Cave but you are NOT LETTING US EAT IT."

Mom thinks we're funny. "There is more to human mating than offspring and partnership."

"What else is there?" we wonder, but she can't explain it in a way we understand.

I'm startled when the humans all suddenly roar together, Hiccup and Astrid are flaring like a sun again and doing what they call 'kissing,' longer and more freely than I've ever seen them do it before.

Then everyone runs.

We dragons are all surprised for a second, but then we get excited

and we fly to beat them to the Big Cave, which makes them all laugh. I catch up to Hiccup and run beside Him, and He's laughing and He smells and looks and sounds so happy happy happy that it makes me happy and excited, too, and I headbutt Him as He runs and He almost falls but Astrid drags Him up again and kisses Him again and He falls back against my side and now I'm kind of annoyed because I have two kissing humans leaning on me.

Stormfly waits for us. "I am happy for them," she says.

"I agree with Hookfang. I'm hungry."

We finally get to the Big Cave and the humans are all waiting and cheering again, and Hiccup smells nervous again as He holds Astrid carefully and lifts her into the Big Cave. Then He relaxes when they're inside and more kissing, just go AWAY and mate already and let us eat!

But NO, of course not, because humans have to make everything stupidly complicated. Hiccup smells nervous nervous nervous and Astrid smells amused and affectionate and I can tell everyone is teasing Him like they used to do all the time in the old days and still do sometimes now. He has a blade in His paw, and He goes up to one of the pillars and holds up the blade, and He kind of looks at me like He really wants my help but I CAN'T HELP YOU IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU NEED HELP WITH, HICCUP. Do You want me to burn down the Big Cave or something? Because I can't figure out what You want unless You say it so I can understand.

He roars and drives the blade into the pillar. More teasing from the other humans, but Hiccup smells relieved, especially when Wise Elder tells us He succeeded with whatever He did. More kissing.

Mom finally feeds us, and I know the humans are doing more stupid things but we don't care anymore because finally the dragons get to eat, and later the humans FINALLY do, too.

"...I only want your hand to hold."

"I only want you near me..."

The humans are having very much fun. Hiccup and Astrid's sun-shining seems to get brighter and brighter. They and all the other humans eat a lot and laugh a lot and dance a lot, and Hiccup and Astrid and Mom dance with me, too, and when I sing with them they laugh as if it's the funniest and fun thing ever. I almost don't notice when the sun goes away and it gets dark.

Hiccup is back to being agitated and He's more sex-hungry than I've ever smelled Him before, and Astrid is back to smelling like she's in heat as they and me and Stormfly and their troop and Mom wander out of the Big Cave and over to our own cave. Whatever Snotlout and Tuffnut and Ruffnut are tormenting Hiccup about is making me want to snap at them, but Mom just feels amused and affectionate and tells me to be calm. The smells are getting stronger and stronger.

"Okay, seriously, we don't actually need witnesses, and if you guys don't get lost in the next ten seconds, I swear I'll have Toothless plasma blast you..."

That was my name. And 'plasma blast,' I know what those sounds mean. I look at Hiccup and start sucking just a little bit of fire into my throat, and He smiles at me.

Snotlout says something that makes Hiccup actually hit him - other humans hit Him all the time, but I've almost never seen Him hit anyone! What on earth did Snotlout say? Then the troop finally leaves, all of them laughing a lot.

"Uuuuuggggghhhh, why couldn't we have just eloped..."

"I'm kind of wishing we had, too..."

It's quiet now with just the five of us. Mom squeezes them both with her forelegs, and she holds Hiccup for a long time. Then she touches her mouth to Astrid's forehead and heads back to the Big Cave, calling me and Stormfly to go with her.

Stormfly follows. I don't. I look at Hiccup and wait, because I don't want to leave Him until I know He's completely okay. He feels better now that the stupid troop is gone, but He's still...

He smiles and strokes my head. "Hey, bud...I love you, but you're kinda gonna have to leave now, okay?"

"Are you happy, Friend?"

"Yeah, um...so, me and Astrid are gonna be alone, Toothless, and you're gonna have to find someplace else to sleep tonight; sorry, buddy..."

If You want me to go away, why are You hugging me and petting me? You want Astrid so much it's clogging my nose and almost making me want to go off and find a female Nightwing, but at the same time You're nervous and needing me. Part of You is reaching for her and part of You is clinging to me as if You're in deep water and can't swim. Do You want me or don't You? Do You need me or don't You? Make up Your mind!

Now Astrid is stroking me too. "Heeeeey, sweetie, it's my turn, okay? I get Hiccup tonight, and then you can have him for a bit tomorrow morning."

"What am I, a toy...?"

I lick Hiccup to put more of my smell on Him; maybe it will comfort Him the way His smell comforts me.

"Aaaaghhh, Toothless...!"

"Ugh!"

"...Astrid, you're not-?"

"You know the rule."

"Seriously?!"

"Yes, seriously, I am not having sex with someone who's covered in dragon spit! Go wash it off!"

"Aaahhh, Toothless...!"

"Heh. But if it makes you feel better, I don't mind joining you for a bath~"

"..."

Now they're both so in heat I think they barely notice me anymore. He'll be okay. I go back to the Big Cave to eat some more.

Afterwards I'm sleepy, but when I try to go to bed I'm surprised and a little hurt when they yell at me and Astrid throws things at me. I have to escape back outside and lie down on the roof instead. But I can't sleep because the smells coming from inside are too strong - no wonder their courtship took so long, I didn't realize humans could take so much time just to mate. The eggs ought to be complete now, but I guess not... I finally look for Mom so I can stay with her tonight instead.

Mom is asleep under one of Cloudjumper's wings. Cloudjumper glares at me when I snuggle under his wing and accidentally wake up Mom, but Mom only smiles and pats my nose.

"Stupid Precious Thing is being mean," I tell her.

"He belongs only to his mate tonight, Beautiful One," she says affectionately.

"ALL night?! How can it possibly take that long to finish some eggs?!"

"I told you, Beautiful, there's more to human mating than simple reproduction and companionship. Human mates can share much more than even the closest dragon mates do."

I sniff at her pregnant belly, and deep within her normal scent I can catch a hint of other scents: Dad and Hiccup and especially the hatchling herself. I think that might have something to do with it, but I'm not sure what.

"...Will I lose Half Of Me?" The thought makes me want to scream and burn something down and then die.

"No, Beautiful." She touches her mouth to my nose. "Of course you'll have to keep sharing him with his mate, but he loves you so incredibly much, Beautiful. He would never part from you, no matter how devoted he is to his human family."

I guess that's okay then. I settle down beside Mom, and she pushes me to make me move, I guess so she'll be more comfortable. When it's quiet, Mom falls asleep soon, and even Cloudjumper drowses, but it takes me a long time to fall asleep.

o.o.o.o.o

As soon as the sun rises, I run back to the cave and climb inside. I don't care if they throw things at me again, it's morning and HE'S MINE NOW.

I have to figure out that they're still two different people lying together in the bed, because they smell almost the same now. They're not 'Hiccup' and 'Astrid,' they're both 'Hiccup-and-Astrid,' and even now I wonder if they really did somehow become one person. Half Of Me,\_ wake up\_. Are You still half of me? Can You still be half of me when You're half of her now, too? HICCUP COME BACK.

"Mmmmmmmrrrrrgghhh..." Sleepy blinking eyes. "Toothless...?"

Hiccup Hiccup Hiccup! Wake up! Come back! You're mine! You're still mine, right?!

"Mmmmm..."

Astrid snuggles closer into Him, and they're kissing and smelling so utterly happy that I feel a little light-headed. And a little in awe, because Mom was right about human mates even though I can't tell exactly how. And I'm getting more and more worried because \_Hiccup come back and be mine\_. It's morning. My turn. You're mine. Right...? \_Right\_...?!

"You sleep okay, milady...?"

"Mmmm, who needs sleep...?"

More kissing.

HICCUP!

"Urgh..."

"Toothless..." Astrid reaches out a foreleg and pats my nose. I try to be polite, but I don't want her; I want my other half!

"You think we can maybe-?"

Hicuuuuuuuuuuuuup!

Astrid laughs and smells both disappointed and affectionate. "I \_did\_ say it'd be his turn in the morning..."

"Mmmmm..."

HICCUP HICCUP HICCUP HICCUP.

"Okay, bud." He yawns and starts to sit up like He's still half asleep. "Okay...okay okay okay \_ow\_, Toothless! I'm- \_Aah\_!"

Astrid pulls the bedding over her head so she's all covered up. "Shut up and go awaaaayyy..."

"Yeah, okay...yeah, I'm coming, Toothless, I'm com- OW! I said I was coming, hold on a sec...!" He keeps trying to feel irritated, but any bad emotion keeps getting melted by all the happiness oozing off Him. Stupid human mating. Get out of bed and \_come fly with me\_, I waited long enough!

Flying with my other half is always amazing, but we've never flown

like this before and I love it. The smell of me and the clouds curl into the Astrid smell so that now He's all Hiccup again, Hiccup/Astrid/me/leather/charcoal/two-header gas/fire-skin spit/meat/clouds and all the other smells that make Him Hiccup. His mating-happiness from before sort of spreads out flatter and wider and gets mixed with breathless joy-of-flying and intense being-with-my-other-half and heart-pounding life-is-fantastic so that He smells completely delicious and sets my mind on fire so that I feel like a flaming sun of joy, too.

If this is because He finally has a true mate now, then okay. It's okay. I will share my other half with His other other half if it means we get to fly like this.

When we get back to the nest, the humans are all cheering and excited again, but Hiccup's heart is still flying even though His feet are on the ground now, and He ignores them all and even ignores his stupid teasing troop and He pulls Astrid back into our cave - so they can mate again? I don't understand it... Judging from how Hiccup-and-Astrid smells up there, I think flying with me might have done the same thing for them that their mating did for flying with me. Is it possible that humans mate just for fun? That doesn't make any sense at all, but I guess it explains why they do it so often and for so long...

"How long are they going to keep this up?" Stormfly wonders as the humans go back to eating a lot and being happy and noisy in the Big Cave.

"Who cares," Hookfang says, snapping up the handful of fish Snotlout tosses at him. "We should get the humans to do this more often. I can't remember the last time we ate this well!"

It lasts for days, so long that I think it's going to go on forever, the eating and the noise and the happiness and the dancing and the singing and Hiccup going from being alone with me to being alone with Astrid to being together with the celebrating humans and then coming back to me. Then it finally ends... A lot of the dragons are sleepy and quiet from eating too much, and the humans seem sluggish and quiet too as they slowly spread out again and go back to their strange human work. Another day or two passes and things are back to normal again.

Except for Hiccup-and-Astrid. That's still different, and I think Mom's right when she says it's going to stay that way forever. My human really does have a mate now, and it really is different than when they were just courting... He neglects me more, which I hate. But then the time He does spend with me is better, and I can't decide whether that makes it okay or not. Hiccup's more distracted now, but He loves me even more now than He did before, and Astrid does, too. She also almost never goes back to her own cave, and I think she lives in our cave with us now.

"Hey, Toothless! Heeeeey, Toothless, hey, sweetie! You wanna try some of this? Huh? Yeah, do you like that? You do~? See, Hiccup, Toothless thinks it's delicious!"

"Astrid, Toothless thinks your yaknog is delicious."

"Yeah, so? What's your point?"

"Ummmmm, oh hey I think Gobber's calling me, gotta go; see you later...!"

"Hmph. Come on, Toothless, let's go see how the shearing's doing."

Am I supposed to go with my other half who's trying to escape, or with His mate who wants me to join her?!

o.o.o.o.o

Mom finally lays her 'baby.' The humans are so scared as she's laying and it takes so long and I think she almost died, but Wise Elder and Cloudjumper helped and Hiccup did something, and now it's morning and they're all still alive and Hiccup is so relieved there's water coming out of His eyes. Humans usually do that when they are sad, but a few times they do it when they're happy.

Mom is asleep and very weak, so Cloudjumper is watching her like a hawk so she won't die as she sleeps. Hiccup and Astrid and their troop are all fussing over the hatchling, who is so tiny that I can barely see her and I'm afraid to even breathe on her. Her smell is big, though: Mom/herself/human hatchling/Dad/Hiccup. That's almost the only way I can tell she's a person, because she smells so strong.

"Hey, Toothless! Hey! What do you think of my little sister, huh? What do you think, bud?"

\_ "She is very beautiful,"\_ I say politely, and lick His face.

"Ha ha, Toothless...!"

"Don't drop her, Hiccup!"

"I'm not!"

\_ "I'M SO HUNGRY!"\_ the hatchling screams, and we finally have to wake up Mom so she can feed her. I'm worried about Mom because I can tell she's so weak and tired, but she smells so very happy, too (but also sad...), that I try to tell myself she's okay.

\_ "She's okay, right, Cloud Jumper? Your human will survive and get strong again so she can take care of her hatchling?"\_

\_ "I will grieve very much if She dies,"\_ he says, which makes me even more worried. I bring Mom some food to make her stronger, and she doesn't eat it but she smiles and thanks me.

\_ "Please live,"\_ I tell her. \_ "Hiccup will break again if you die."\_ I HATE when He breaks, because then I feel like I'm going to die.

\_ "I will try very hard to live, Beautiful, for as long as my hatchlings need me."\_

Hiccup is not a hatchling, but she said it a little different than dragons do. Human parents and offspring are much much much much much more attached to each other than dragon ones are, even after the

hatchlings are all grown up and have mates and hatchlings of their own. It's like Hiccup's dam still thinks of Him as a hatchling even though He isn't anymore.

\_ "Go away now, Young Nightwing,"\_ Cloudjumper tells me. \_ "Let Her rest."\_

Life is harder after that. Mom is still weak for a while, and she finally gets better again but it takes a loooooong time. Me and Hiccup never fly anymore, not for fun; sometimes we go out patrolling, but He's always too tired and busy to fly for real.

The hatchling (the humans call her "Halla") \_never seems to grow\_. She's always still tiny and noisy and helpless, and we all take turns caring for her but Hiccup also has to go and be alpha every day and Astrid has to be consort, so they're always so tired and there's no more dancing and we almost never play, and the humans in our aerie sleep so deeply every night that I keep thinking they went into hibernation. Except for when Halla's screeching wakes them up, then they'll stir and groan and one of them will finally get up to take care of her, and a lot of times they fall asleep again before they can get back into their beds.

Cloudjumper never leaves his human's side, so whenever they need something that the humans aren't around to get for them, Cloudjumper makes me get it instead. I don't really mind. I'm worried about Mom. I wish her hatchling would hurry and grow up. Human lives are so \_short\_, but they grow so SLOW, it doesn't make any sense...

Halla is crying again. I raise my head, but Hiccup and Astrid are sleeping so deeply they don't even move.

\_ "Young Nightwing,"\_ Cloudjumper finally calls for me. I sigh and go down to where Mom is lying by the warm fire, holding the hatchling to her breast in her sleep, but Halla's not suckling and Mom isn't actually awake to see what she really needs. \_ "Go get one of the small clean skins from that pile over there."\_

\_ "I was sleeping."\_

\_ "Go get it,"\_ he snaps.

\_ "I'm your alpha, and I'll tell YOU to go get it."\_

\_ "Selfish lazy alphas don't last long."\_ He's right because he's the one taking care of our flock right now and I'm not, even though I'm supposed to because that's my job, so fiiiiiiiiine, I go to the pile and try to pick up one of the little skins with my teeth. I think more than one ended up in my mouth, and more fall on the ground when I move away.

\_ "Try not to get any saliva on it, I don't think that's good for the hatchling."\_

\_ "YOU try it if it's so easy."\_ But I do my best to keep the skin (skins?) clean as I bring it/them over.

Cloudjumper manages to get Halla's dirty skin off of her and clean her up. I don't think either of us can get the clean skin \_on\_ her, but luckily Mom wakes up before we have to try, and she thanks us

both and she wraps the skin around her own hatchling. "I'm so sorry I didn't wake up sooner..."

Cloudjumper leans down to nuzzle her. "Rest, Half Of Me. Your hatchling is safe."

"Is she ever going to grow?" I ask.

Mom smiles and pats my face. "In time, Beautiful, yes. I'm so sorry it's taking so long."

"I know, I know; humans are different," I pout. "Sooooo different, always different...stupid humans..."

"Be patient, Beautiful. Your other half will be able to go flying with you again once things settle down."

I'm glad to hear it, but I'm still very not happy that He doesn't fly with me now. "Stupid Half Of Me."

She's right, though. Sort of. After a while I look in my memories and realize that Halla has been growing a little, and our aerie humans finally aren't as tired as before, and Hiccup does finally finally FINALLY start flying with me again sometimes.

But not for long.

Because then we lose Hiccup.

And it takes SO LONG to find Him again.

And when we do finally find Him again, HE HAS AN ANNOYING THING WITH HIM, AND HE TAKES IT BACK WITH US TO ADD TO OUR AERIE, AND I HATE HER AND IT'S NOT FAIR; YOU'RE MY PRECIOUS THING, COME BACK TO ME....!

To be continued...

Author's Notes: This fic actually isn't a multi-chaptered work - the only reason I put "TBC" at the end of this one is because it did end on something of a cliffhanger. But the story I intended to tell with this installment (Hiccup & Astrid's wedding from Toothless's POV) is finished. The next story I post in this series is probably NOT going to be Hiccup's adventure where he ends up with "Annoying Thing" at the end of it - that one's going to take too long (and will probably be either third person POV or Hiccup's POV), and there are other stories I want to write first. ^^; I'd actually started writing a different story this afternoon, but then decided it would be better to write and post HiccStrid's wedding first.

Although I tried to gloss over it and not get too bogged down in details, I did look up Viking wedding ceremonies in order to write this fic: .

Humans don't actually go "in heat" (their sexual receptivity is pretty much the same no matter what point in the menstrual cycle they are; as opposed to animals who are only sexually receptive when they're in estrus). But I don't think most animals understand the whole lust thing; for them, it's pretty much either "MUST PROCREATE" or nothing, so I figured it would be pretty difficult for a dragon to

translate the concept. \*sweatdrop\*

I really love platonic/dual/romantic trios where the platonic pairing is equal to or gets more screentime than the romantic one, and Toothless/Hiccup/Astrid fits \_perfectly\_. X3

Halla's name took more research than I thought it would, but the research was basically just to confirm that it wouldn't be a bad idea to use a name that references Valhallarama, Hiccup's mother in the book series. :p

## 2. First Flight

\_\*\*Two Worlds, One Family\*\*\_\*\*, a \*\*\*\*DreamWorks' \*\*\_\*\*How to Train Your Dragon\*\*\_\*\* fanfic series by Raberba girl\*\*

\*\*First Flight\*\*\*\* (rough draft)\*\*

Summary: Toothless has a hard time adjusting to Hiccup's first child.

A/N: Toothless's POV.

o.o.o

It's only been a few months since we found Hiccup holding her, but I feel like Annoying has been ruining my life \_always\_. Making Hiccup forget me and neglect me, sucking the energy out of Him as if she's a rotten little leech, \_always getting in the way\_, I think Hiccup might be angry if He knew HOW MANY TIMES I've wanted to grab His stupid hatchling and carry her to the nearest cliff and dump her into the ocean.

LOVE ME, HICCUP. You can love Your mate because she \_understands\_ and she \_doesn't get in the way\_, but Annoying pushes me away from You and she doesn't deserve Your love and \_I'm\_ more important than her!

...Except I'm not. Because hatchlings always come first.

I hate hatchlings and I'm never going to have any even if I \_do\_ ever find a mate.

I'm half awake and licking Annoying's head because she is whimpering from another bad dream. I don't know why she has bad dreams when nothing bad has ever happened to her; all I can think is maybe somehow she misses her real dam without knowing it. Stupid hatchling. She shouldn't have latched onto Hiccup if she'd wanted to be raised with her real flock, so it's her own fault if she misses them.

She quiets down and curls closer into me, and I stop licking her when I realize what I'm doing. Why is she coming to \_me\_? I don't want her! \_Hiccup\_ is her mother, not me. But He's usually tired, and sometimes Astrid pushes Annoying out of their bed when she's being especially annoying, and there's more room on my own bed, but I don't care. \_Go away\_, stupid hatchling!

\_ "Mama,"\_ Annoying says sleepily.

"I'm not your mother. Your mother is over there on the other side of the cave."

"Cold." She snuggles into me again.

I try to push her away. "When are you going to learn how to make your own fire?"

The talking is waking her up, and she raises her head to blink at me.  
"Daddy?"

"I AM NOT YOUR SIRE."

She licks me, and I hiss and back away. I'm going to go up to the roof because she's chased me out of my bed. Stupid hatchlings always do that, I hate it...!

"Play with me, Daddy!"

No! I go to Hiccup's bed and bark to wake Him up. He stirs but doesn't open His eyes. I nudge His head, and He grumbles but only half wakes up. "Wake up, Charcoal Paws! Take care of Your own hatchling so I don't have to!"

"Toothless, it's too early..."

"Mama!" Annoying jumps up on the bed and bounces on Him. Her tail is flopping on Astrid, and I feel a little gleeful because I know that Astrid's going to get mad at her soon.

"Oof...!" Hiccup grunts.

"Uuurrggghhh, Hiccup..." Astrid moans.

"I know..."

"Mama, Mama, Mama~"

"Freefaaaaall, go back to bed..."

"Wake up, Charcoal Paws," I order.

"Hiccup, get BOTH your noisy dragons out of here before I start throwing things at them."

"Okay...okay, guys, I'm coming, please shut up..."

We go down below and I swallow my breakfast as fast as I can and then run outside to circle the nest over and over until Hiccup finishes feeding Annoying. Finally I hear the cave open, so I run back and headbutt Hiccup because He's too slow. Let's go fly already!

"Okay, all right, Toothless, just a second...hey, hold still, bud, I can't...! Agh, Toothless..."

Of course Annoying comes with us, blech. She LOVES flying but she's too young to fly herself, so she has to sit on me when I fly, and I hate it. She scampers around so much and nearly knocks us out of the air every time she goes too far out on my wings, and Hiccup is too

slow pulling her back, so finally I get mad and dive into the water a few times to teach them a lesson.

\_ "MAMA! MAMA! WHAT'S HAPPENING?! IT'S SCARY AND I DON'T LIKE IT!" \_

"T-Toothless...\_Thor\_, that w-water is cold, d-don't do that ag-again...urgh, Freef-fall, your c-claws hurt..."

I feel a little bad, but not very much, because now Annoying is frightened and clinging to Hiccup's shoulders so she's not climbing around my back anymore. \_Good\_.

We can't play as much when we have the hatchling, but if we don't bring her with us then we can't fly at all. She'll whimper and get very upset when we try to leave her behind, and Hiccup's soft little heart breaks. I wish He'd never brought her home.

\_ "Slow loop," \_ Hiccup says. He's FINALLY learning how to talk better for real, because Mom has been teaching Him. I circle up and over and down, and if we were alone I'd get to do it fast like a flash, but now we have to do it slow so Annoying won't fall off.

\_ "Aaah! Aaah! So fun!" \_ she cries.

This is not fun, this is boring, stupid hatchling...

"Yeah! Nice job, Toothless."

...Hiccup is proud of me and it makes me feel good. It's hard to be mad at Annoying when Hiccup loves me.

\_ "Glide. ...Bank left. ...Gentle dive- GENTLE!" \_

Boriiiiing...

But I feel happier by the time we come back to the nest. Mom and Cloudjumper meet us in the air, and it's tricky in a fun way to fly close enough that Hiccup can hand Annoying to Mom without me and Cloudjumper fouling each other's flights.

"Morning, Mom!"

"Good morning, love."

"Can you take Freefall for a second? I want to let Toothless show off a little."

"Of course."

\_ "Mama?! Mama?!" \_ Annoying is worried when Mom holds her and Hiccup unhooks her claws; she acts like she's going to die just because she's not attached to Him. But then I forget about her, just for a few minutes, as me and Half Of Me are \_finally\_ free for just a little while, soaring through the air and up into the clouds and around the island. When we have to come back, Annoying is excited from watching us and she wants to come and do it, too.

\_ "Another time, Sweet One," \_ Mom says. \_ "Right now, you need another feeding." \_

\_ "Mama and Daddy are amazing~~~! I want to go be amazing with them!" \_

\_ "You're too young to be amazing," \_ I snap, \_ "and I am NOT your sire!" \_

Hiccup laughs when Mom gives His hatchling back to Him. "Heh, easy, Freefall. You like that, huh? Toothless is really cool, isn't he~? Settle down, girl, you- OW! Urgh, I think that was my liver..."

o.o.o.o.o

Hiccup is trying to teach Annoying how to fly. I hate it because He has to use me to teach her.

"Okay, so see how Toothless has his wings out like that? You have to do that, too, but they have to stay spread, Freefall, don't fold them up and bounce around every time you get distracted..."

She doesn't listen and keeps doing it wrong. I want to scream and fly away, but Hiccup is so patient, which is usually a good thing but now it's bad and I wish He'd be meaner. "One more time, Freefall. Come on, girl, you can do it..."

Mom and Cloudjumper come to watch us. Me and Hiccup are hovering just past the cliff edge, and Annoying is staring at us with her wings stretched out and all her claws dug into the ground. It's hard trying to fly in one place, especially with a human on my back. \_ "You can't fly if you won't let go of the ground," \_ I snap at her. \_ "Let GO!" \_

\_ "No! I'm scared! Come back here and comfort me, Mama!" \_

"Come on, Freefall, don't be afraid! We'll catch you if you fall, I promise! Come on out...!"

Cloudjumper finally picks up Annoying and throws her off the cliff. I want to thank him, but I can't because Hiccup panics and forces me down to go catch her. She's falling and screaming as if she doesn't know what wings are for. "Hold on, Freefall! We're coming, we're coming!"

\_ "HELP MEEEEEE!" \_

\_ "FLAP YOUR WINGS YOU STUPID HATCHLING!" \_ I scream back at her.

\_ "SPREAD YOUR TAIL FINS!" \_

Of course she doesn't. I dive under her and Hiccup catches her in His forelegs. She whimpers and cheeps in terror, and I can sense her digging all her claws into His flesh and hurting Him, so I growl.

"It's okay, Freefall, it's okay, I got you, you're safe."

\_ "Mama! Mama! Mama...!" \_

We fly back up to the top of the cliff, and Mom helps Hiccup comfort Annoying until she calms down.

\_ "Thank you for trying,"\_ I tell Cloudjumper.

\_ "That usually works...maybe it's different for hatchlings who are raised by humans."\_ He gives the three of them an unhappy look. \_ "I don't think it was good to bring her into our aerie, but if the hatchling really did imprint on your human, I don't know what else he could have done."\_

\_ "Half Of Me saved her life."\_ I hate that Annoying is His now, but I'm still proud of Him. He is a special special special human for saving her when she should have died; I have the very best human in the whole world.

\_ "We will have to trust him."\_

\_ "He is very smart. He fixed my tail, so He can make her fly, too."\_

o.o.o.o.o

Hiccup doesn't make Annoying jump into the air anymore. Now He just holds her up for a long time with only His paws, so that she can't reach Him to cling to Him. Mom holds her wing out on one side and Astrid holds her other wing out so that she can't fold them, and Hiccup has her tail tied to His shoulder so she has to keep it straight out like she's supposed to.

Annoying wriggles all her legs in the air like a bug, but she can't get down. \_ "I don't like it! I don't like it!"\_

"Just a few more minutes, Freefall."

\_ "I don't like iiiiit!"\_

\_ "If you STAY STILL, they'll let you go sooner,"\_ I try to explain to her.

\_ "Calm down and feel how your body is right now, Little Nightwing,"\_ Cloudjumper says. \_ "You are going to have to stay in this position when you fly."\_

\_ "But tuck your legs in,"\_ I say, \_ "close to your body."\_

\_ "Mamaaaaaaaaaaa, I don't like iiiiiiiiiiiiiit...!"\_

Mom sighs. "She doesn't understand. If she ever learns at all from this method, it won't be soon."

"Aahhh, Freefall..."

It takes DAYS, but Annoying finally figures out to just let Hiccup hold her and keep her wings spread and her tail out and her legs tucked without the other humans pulling on her. \_ "Wheee~! Look~ I'm flying~!"\_

\_ "You are NOT flying, you're still just sitting in my human's paws!"\_ I snap at her.

\_ "Very good, Little Nightwing,"\_ Cloudjumper says.

"Okay, nice work, Freefall! Ready for step two?"

Hiccup finds a tree stump on a high hill and ties a rope around it. He ties the other end of the rope to Annoying. Then He holds up Annoying in His paws like usual, but this time, after the wind catches her and she's humming and pretending she's flying, He carefully takes His paws away. It's just like a long time ago when He was learning how to fly with me, and I think it is very funny, but I try to stay quiet so Annoying won't realize she's in the air all by herself. We all watch her for a while.

\_ "Sweet breeze~ I am flying~ I am amazing~"\_ Then she sees Hiccup. She sees that Hiccup is not holding her. \_ "HELP!"\_ she screams, and she wriggles her legs and flaps her wings and scrunches her tail fins in tight, exactly she like shouldn't do when she's gliding, so of course she drops to the ground. \_ "Ooooowww! Mama!"\_

"Freefall! Hey, hey, it's okay, girl, you did great, I'm so proud of you!"

o.o.o.o.o

We're on top of a cliff again. Hiccup and Mom and Cloudjumper and Stormfly are all telling Annoying that she can fly and not to be scared. She's still very unhappy and staring at us with the very big eyes that sometimes make Hiccup do what she wants even when He doesn't mean to.

\_ "Come, Little Nightwing, you can do this."\_

\_ "All dragons learn how to fly!"\_ Stormfly says. \_ "You'll learn, too."\_

\_ "Come,"\_ says Mom, \_ "today is the day."\_

\_ "Noooo, I don't like it out there! I want to stay here! Mama, pick me up and comfort me!"\_

"Come on, Freefall!"

All three of us jump off the cliff and then circle around and around, waiting for Annoying to join us.

\_ "Mama! Mama! Come back!"\_

"Come on, Freefall, we're right here! You can do it, girl, it's okay!"

\_ "Mamaaaaaa!"\_

"Come on, Freefall!" Hiccup stretches out both His forelegs as if He thinks Annoying will jump all the way into them. "I'm right here! I won't let anything bad happen to you, I promise!"

Annoying starts whimpering, but me and Astrid and Mom don't let Hiccup go comfort her. Then Annoying starts screeching, and when that doesn't work, she flops down and sulks. Cloudjumper starts flying away, and Stormfly follows her. Hiccup doesn't want to get farther

away from His hatchling, but I fight His control until He finally turns away and starts following Cloudjumper and the females.

\_ "MAMA!" \_

\_ "If you don't come, you'll get left behind," \_ Mom calls.

\_ "Nooooo!" \_

Suddenly Hiccup gasps and jerks me around, and I see that Annoying finally jumped off the cliff and is - falling. A little. She has her wings and fins stretched out as far as they will go, but she needs to flap first until the wind catches her before she can glide. She looks completely terrified.

"Freefall!" We dive down beside her. "Flap your wings, Freefall!" Hiccup stretches out His forelegs wide and waves them as if they're wings.

\_ "MAMA!" \_ Annoying tries to reach out for Him, and when she can't, she suddenly starts churning her wings. She's trying to land on Him, but she misses and shoots over His shoulder instead. I circle around toward her, but by the time we reach her, she's FINALLY understood. She's trembling and wide-eyed and terrified, but she's gliding now.

"Stay back, Hiccup!" Mom says. \_ "Look at you, Sweet One! \_Look\_ at you, you are so beautiful and amazing, flying all by yourself!" \_

\_ "I...I am...?" \_ Annoying tucks in her legs close and peers fearfully down at the ocean far below.

"Atta girl, Freefall!" Hiccup yells. "Atta girl!"

Astrid swoops in close. "Oooh, she's so cute."

The longer we fly, the more confident Annoying gets, and soon she's swooping and diving among us like hatchlings on their first flights are supposed to. \_ "Look at me! Look at me~~~!" \_

\_ "Very nice, Little Nightwing," \_ Cloudjumper says politely.

\_ "I TOLD you you could do it if you just tried and listened," \_ I tell her. \_ "See? Now you're flying like a real dragon." \_

I am not expecting her to swoop in close and bop her head against mine, clumsily showing affection. \_ "Now I can fly just like you, Daddy! I love you!" \_

...I don't know what to say. Annoying has never made me feel like this before.

She looks confused. \_ "You're supposed to tell me you're not my sire and get mad." \_

\_ "...I'm not mad." \_

\_ "You're not?!" \_

\_ "I don't want to say this, but I will say it because it's true and Half Of Me would want me to. I'm proud of you, Hatchling." \_

\_ "Really?! I'm so happy! I'm so happy~~~!" \_

For the first time in a long time, I'm happy, too.

o.o.o

Author's Notes: This is now the second time I've tried to write a story about Hiccup & Astrid's first child, and ended up writing a different story instead. ^^; Freefall is a little older than their firstborn, so I figured I should write about her first, and she ended up giving me enough material for a complete one-shot. Hopefully next time I'll finally get to HiccStrid's kid!

I love playing with gender roles, and I particularly love guys who can hold on to their masculinity despite having traditionally feminine traits or roles. XD Because of how Freefall was born, she imprinted on Hiccup so that he became her surrogate "mother."

Man, I never intended to write this much HTTYD fanfiction from the dragons' POV, but I'm really comfortable with and interested in their perspective. ^^; I'll try to write more stuff from the humans' POV eventually.

"Stupid hatchlings always do that, I hate it...!" That was a reference to Torch from the TV show. :p

### 3. What It Feels Like To Be Different

\*\*Two Worlds, One Family\*\*\_\*\*, a \*\*\*\*DreamWorks' \*\*\_\*\*How to Train Your Dragon\*\*\_\*\* fanfic series by Raberba girl\*\*

**\*\*What It Feels Like To Be Different (rough draft)\*\***

Summary: Hiccup has a heart-to-heart with his discouraged son.

A/N: I'm actually not sure how old Hiccup's kid is here. XD At first I thought he was more like eight years old, but then as I was actually drafting, I figured it's more likely he's a teenager.

LOL, this isn't in a dragon's perspective, for once! XD It's third person POV.

o.o.o

Hiccup and Toothless picked their way through the dense woods, following Skullcrusher. Ordinarily, Toothless could have found a specific human on his own, but this particular boy had become so adept at covering his tracks that it took a tracker dragon to find him these days.

\_Whomp!\_

Toothless snarled at the tree branch that had hit him in the

face.

"Easy, bud, we're almost- Ack!" Hiccup unhooked his hair from a low-hanging tangle of twigs, then spent the next couple of minutes frantically trying to brush a disturbed colony of small insects off the back of his neck and shoulders. Toothless helpfully licked up the last few strays. "Blech,, that was-" Hiccup shuddered, still imagining the feel of the insects' minuscule feet moving over his skin. "Okay whatever; did we lose-? Skullcrusher! Hold on, wait up!"

They finally found a tree perched on the very edge of a cliff, some of its roots exposed and swaying gently in the breeze over the steep drop. Young Stoick the Second was sitting up on one of the tree branches, staring out into the vast distance. Most of the residents of Berk would have felt safe enough in a precarious position like that, trusting that their dragons would catch them in case they fell. With Stoick, however, Hiccup knew that the boy wouldn't even bother calling for a dragon, and would instead rely on his own athleticism and weapons to save himself.

A small Gronckle suddenly burst out of the trees, wings buzzing as it half-flew and half-scampered over to the chief. It licked Hiccup's knee and gazed up at him adoringly, prompting Toothless to do the dragon equivalent of rolling his eyes. Skullcrusher, his mission complete, wandered off to forage.

"Axebreath," Hiccup said to the little Gronckle, trying to sound stern, "what part of 'Look after Stoick' do you not understand?" Then, in communication that the dragon could actually comprehend, "Supposed to keep my offspring safe."

"He's fine! See?"

"He's good now, but danger could come while you are gone!"

"Alphacub doesn't need dragons."

...Which was probably true.

"And he doesn't want me. He doesn't like us, so I don't like him." Axebreath made a purring gurgle and nuzzled Hiccup's leg. "I love you, though."

Toothless made a very soft, slightly jealous growl in response.

The chief sighed, then patted the Gronckle's head and gently shooed it away. Hiccup took a few steps toward his brooding son.

"Toothless isn't allowed to lick me," Stoick said brusquely, his eyes still firmly fixed on the distant mountains. "Or lean on me, or fly around me, or loom over me, or..."

Hiccup sighed again and grudgingly gestured for Toothless to keep his distance.

"Your offspring is very hard to raise," Toothless observed, not for the first time.

\_ "Yes..." \_

\_ "If you were dragons, he would be grown up by now and not bother you anymore." \_

\_ 'Sometimes I wish I was a dragon,' \_ Hiccup thought. \_ 'Seems like it would make things so much easier...' \_ Not having a good response, he simply grinned at his friend, who grinned toothlessly back and then prowled off to amuse himself while he waited.

Hiccup approached the tree and climbed up to join Stoick, sparing a nervous downward glance. The ground was completely obscured by mist; the drop looked bottomless. \_ 'It's fine. I have wings, and Toothless would hear me fall; I can just glide until he or Skullcrusher rescues me.' \_ He rather admired his son's fearlessness. "Hey, Stoick—"

"I don't want to talk, okay?" Stoick snapped. "I ran off so I could be alone."

"...Trust me, I get it. But you've been gone for three days now, and your mom's been getting worried- \*sigh\* Okay, I'm the one who's been more worried." He had never really, truly understood parental fear until he'd had little ones of his own, precious hatchlings who could terrify him with even the mere hint of anything threatening their well-being. He now felt extremely sorry for his own father. \_ 'I was such an idiot kid, practically throwing myself into danger all the time. How did you not go crazy from worry, Dad?' \_

"I'm FINE. I can handle a few days alone in the wilderness, dragons or no dragons."

"Yeah, but we don't know you're fine when we're sitting back at home, wondering if you've run afoul of strangers, if you've stumbled across a titan class dragon, if you got injured in an accident and then of course you have no reliable dragon to send for help—"

"I'm not a weakling, okay?! I can handle it! I can take care of myself! I'm such a weirdo that I'm safer WITHOUT any flaming reptiles following me around, okay?!"

Hiccup, quickly losing patience, was about to snap out a retort, but then he heard Toothless pause nearby and growl in warning. Hiccup forced himself to take a deep breath and consider his words before speaking. All too often, these arguments ended with Stoick stalking off even angrier than before, leaving Hiccup to rant to Toothless or Astrid about his frustrations and wonder why he could never seem to understand or connect to his own son. It was especially baffling because he felt like he knew his daughters well enough to read their minds sometimes, so why was it so different with Stoick?

"You just don't get it, Dad! You'll NEVER get it! You've got dragons always flocking around you like puppies, you're the expert with all the answers whose Night Fury who loves you more than he loves his own mate, you can walk into a cave full of wild dragons and talk them into not killing you... You're the Dragon Master!"

"I don't call myself th—"

"You're the Greatest Viking Hero Who Ever Lived! The Peacekeeper! No one can even come close to being as great as you, especially me, so why am I supposed to be your heir when I can NEVER BE YOU?!"

It shook and pained Hiccup to see that he'd apparently become the sort of father that he'd vowed never to be. "S...Stoick, listen..."

"Dragons hate me! And I can't read, Freefall can read better than I can! Trying to make stuff with all the fiddly tools and bits of metal drives me crazy, I'm not good at anything, and then stuff I am good at no one cares about-"

"Hey\_. Stoick. I hear you!"

"No, you don't! You never listen!"

'It's me and Dad all over again. All over again. I hate this.' "Stoick, I know exactly how you feel."

"You don't know ANYTHING about how I feel! You're Hiccup the Dragonfriend\_, chief of Berk. You can't possibly know what it's like to be different, to be the only one in your village who sucks at all the stuff everyone else is good at...!"

Toothless had climbed up the tree and was now resting his head on his friend's shoulder in concern. Hiccup, his heart aching, patted Toothless's cheek, grateful for the reassuring weight and warmth. He tried to remind himself that he was talking to his son, not his past self. "Stoick. You know why I'm called 'Hiccup,' right?"

"Because 'Hiccup Horrendous Haddock' is such a horrible name that it'll scare off any gnomes or trolls who'd fight past all your dragons to try to hurt you," Stoick muttered.

Hiccup rolled his eyes, because Stoick was playing dumb and knew perfectly well what he was trying to get at. "I was a runt, Stoick. Arms and legs like sticks, couldn't lift a hammer or swing an axe to save my life... Heh, your mom thought I was pathetic when we were kids."

Stoick made a scoffing sound.

"It's true. You know how we used to be at war with the dragons, don't you? Constant raids, dragons burning and wrecking the village over and over and over again... I was so weak, several times during the raids I'd run into dragons and they'd just pass right by me\_ because they didn't see me as a threat."

"Or they just sensed your Peacekeeping Dragon Soul and knew you were more dragon than human," Stoick retorted sourly.

"I couldn't fight\_, Stoick. And back when Berk was a constant war zone, a Viking who couldn't fight pretty much wasn't a Viking at all. I..." Hiccup gave a self-deprecating chuckle. "I still can't fight, actually."

"Are you KIDDING me?" Stoick said angrily. "Red Death, Bewilderbeast, Drago Bludvist, everyone else you took down in all those ballads they sing about you?"

"Stoick, when I'm with Toothless, we're unstoppable, because Toothless is incredible and amazing." The Night Fury nuzzled him, making Hiccup smile. "But take away my dragons and my allies and my 'fiddly' inventions, and I'm just..." '\_A pathetic, helpless weakling.\_ "...the worst Viking Berk has ever seen," he said aloud, his lips twisted wryly at old memories.

"Right," Stoick said, sounding fed up. He braced his arm against the tree trunk and hopped to his feet.

The tree lurched sharply.

For one second, father and son urgently scrambled to find a grip, to regain their footing, but it was in vain. Stoick's grasping fingers hit the tree bark at the wrong angle; Hiccup's prosthetic foot slipped, and the sleeve that Toothless caught in his teeth tore straight through. The humans went plummeting down into the mist below.

"Toothless!" Hiccup screamed, even though he was already reaching for the mechanisms on his flight suit, deploying his wings and fins. His best friend came hurtling after him, crying out in concern and flapping mightily to reach him. As they had done countless times in the past, they met in midair and transformed from two to one, immediately gaining control of their descent and then swooping around and upward.

Now it was his son Hiccup screamed for. "Stoick!" He suddenly realized that they should be going down, heading off Stoick so they could catch him. Toothless instantly changed direction, and Hiccup's heart was in his mouth as they dropped, broke through the mist, and searched frantically for the boy.

There was no sign of him. "Where is he?!" Hiccup cried.

Toothless called out in distress and swooped back and forth, but Stoick was nowhere to be seen in the air or on the ground or in the trees.

"Stoick?" Surely his son would be dead by now, his body a splattered pile of gore. Trembling in hope and terror, Hiccup guided Toothless upward again until they broke back through the mist, approached the top of the cliff - and finally spotted the boy. Stoick, hanging from a rope with the grappling hook at the end wedged securely above, was calmly making his way up the cliff face. The Gronckle who was supposed to be protecting him was sitting at the top of the cliff, watching his progress with mild interest. Skullcrusher's large form was barely visible in the distance, napping beneath the trees.

"AXEBREATH!" Hiccup roared in fury. The dragon sat up in alarm and stared at him with wide eyes. Hiccup stabbed his finger toward Stoick.

\_ "What do you want me to do?"\_ Axebreath asked obligingly.

\_ "SAVE HIM!"\_

\_ "From what?"\_ the Gronckle asked, genuinely confused.

\_ "Is he not all right?"\_ Toothless wondered.

\_ "MY SON JUST FELL OFF A CLIFF! BE MORE WORRIED!"\_

\_ "Why?"\_ both dragons asked in unison.

Hiccup finally had to admit that they were right. Stoick had nearly reached the cliff's top by now, and within the next minute, he had swung himself back onto the grass, disengaged the grappling hook, and had the rope coiled back into place at his belt. He turned around and glared at his father as Hiccup and Toothless landed nearby. "Fine," he admitted grudgingly, "the grappling hook comes in handy sometimes, I'll give you that."

"The \_grappling\_...?!" Hiccup stumbled toward him. Stoick's eyes widened and he tried to bolt, but Hiccup fell on him before he could escape and hugged him tightly. "Don't \_scare\_ me like that!"

"I'm FINE, Dad!" Stoick shoved him away and crossed his arms, glowering at the ground.

\_ 'He's so strong,'\_ Hiccup marveled. He hadn't been able to hold on, and it occurred to him that his own half-grown son might be able to beat him if they ever physically struggled for real.

"Stoick..."

"See? Your dragon is \_useless\_." Stoick pointed accusingly at Axebreath, who cocked his head curiously. "YOU may love dragons and get your strength from them and whatever, but th...that's \_not me\_, Dad! I'm never going to fit in; no matter how hard I try, I'll never be a real dragon rider and \_I don't want to be\_..."

Hiccup heard the unshed tears in his son's voice, and his heart ached. He put an arm around the boy's shoulders and tried to smile. "I'm sorry, Stoick."

"Sorry for \_what\_? For having a son who can't ever be the kind of heir you want?"

Hiccup squeezed him affectionately. "I'm sorry for making you feel like you can't be the kind of heir \_you\_ need to be."

"What...?"

"You have ideas, don't you? About how you'd run things if you were me."

Stoick stood silent, his expression tight.

"I \_know\_ you wouldn't do things the same way I would, and that's not necessarily a bad thing, Stoick. Tell me on the way home. Okay? Your ideas. Knowing you, there'll be some good ones. We'll work something out."

They had been walking for a while before Stoick finally muttered, in such a low voice that it was difficult for Hiccup to hear him, "Battle gear for the dragons."

"What?"

"Like the headgear they used to have."

Hiccup's expression darkened. "You mean what Drago forced on them when they were his prisoners?" he said, trying very hard to keep his tone neutral.

"Yeah. But, no, I mean, sort of, but of course you'd design it differently...you can do that part," Stoick added sulkily. Then, when his father remained silent and didn't try to discourage him, "It'd really be useful the next time we get attacked, you know? It doesn't have to be restrictive, you're gonna want them to have full mobility- I mean, look at Toothless!" He pointed almost accusingly at the Night Fury, who cocked his head warily. "He's ALWAYS been covered in gear, and I know you eased up on it over the years, but he's always gonna have to wear something when he needs his tail to fly. And the battle gear wouldn't even be stuff they wear all the time, it's only for, you know, battle, so they can cause more damage and have more protection, and you'd do your magic blacksmith stuff so they could still move around like normal, maybe even take it off themselves if you want them to be able to do that..."

As Hiccup listened, he gradually shifted from horrified and disapproving to thoughtful, then to excited, and now his mind was racing with ideas like it always did when he was considering new inventions or improvements. "Yeah...yeah, if we test their weight tolerance and mobility beforehand, and install some sort of mechanism they can activate with their claws or spines or something if they need to get the gear off themselves, and...wow, Stoick, that's actually..."

Father and son were engaged in animated conversation the entire way home, even as they came through the door of the house and realized that they were just in time for supper. Astrid later congratulated her husband on, for once, having successfully navigated a conversation with their son.

Hiccup smiled and gave her a playful kiss. "Now to see if you can make it through a meaningful conversation with Lily without wanting to break things afterward, huh?"

"Uuuuggghhh..."

o.o.o

Author's Notes: This story was totally unplanned! I was just doing laundry and some of the dialogue started writing itself in my head, so I hurried to get it recorded before I lost it. Then I figured, "What the heck," and just started drafting for real until I reached a good place to end it. ^^; I'd been thinking of it as just a little drabble, but it ended up longer than I expected.

\*\*It's very possible that a lot of the stuff in Hiccup & Stoick's conversation is stuff they would have already talked about before now, but\*\*...I did say this series was going to be a mess like Stepsiblings, right? ^^;

After some frustrating research, I finally just decided to name Hiccup & Astrid's daughter "Lily" (who's younger than Stoick Junior),

after one of Cressida Cowell's cats. ^^; (Ms. Cowell is the author of the HTTYD book series.) FTR, for this series, there are four children in Hiccup's family altogether: Halla, his much younger sister; Freefall, the female Night Fury hatchling he and Toothless adopted; Stoick II, his son with Astrid; and Lily, his daughter with Astrid. And yes, Toothless has a mate by now (I haven't written about her yet), so I guess Tooth is eventually gonna have some kids of his own, too. ^^;

Btw, what's with the lack of response to this fanfic? (And The Dragon Queen of Berk, for that matter.) Over a thousand people have read it in just a few days, so I thought they were clicking on the story and hating it; but then hundreds of people apparently liked it enough to check out the second installment. Yet there's barely any feedback? I don't get it. It's true that I write for my own enjoyment, but it's still really encouraging and helpful to hear other people's actual thoughts on my stories, especially when I see so very MANY people reading them. (Thank you, Layman and kitty.0, and the others who did take the time to leave some feedback on my HTTYD fanfiction!)

#### 4. Rulers of Berk

Rulers of Berk

(rough draft)

A Dreamworks' How to Train Your Dragon fanfic by Raberba girl

Summary: The "royal family" of Berk prepares to receive important visitors.

\*\*A/N: Although this is \*\*\_\*mostly\*\_\*\* a \*\*\_\*Two Worlds, One Family\*\_\*\* fic, it does deviate a bit in that it uses my "Dragon Queen of Berk" headcanon.\*\*

I finally made a basic timeline. In this story, Halla is ten years old, and so is Freefall (though only in "human years"); Stoick II is nine, and so is Toothless's offspring Daydream (in human years); Lily (Hiccup & Astrid's daughter) is six. Toothless's mate is another Night Fury OC named Empress (they have a...complicated relationship; at any rate, Hiccup is still definitely Toothless's Most Important Person).

There were other, much more important stories I should have worked on before this one, but the opening scene of this had been playing through my mind for a couple of days, and I ended up drafting the whole fic in between working to clean my room. ^^;

o.o.o

Hiccup had only gone to bed about three hours before, having stayed up late fighting over one set of plans with Gobber and another set of plans with Snotlout.

Astrid had gone to bed about two hours before, trudging back into town with her soldiers after a skirmish, making her way to the chieftain's house, and falling into bed without bothering to change

out of her bloodstained clothes or even remove her armor. Hiccup was so tired that he wouldn't have cared even if he'd been awake.

Toothless had just sprawled onto his bed and fallen asleep twenty minutes before, having been up all night dealing with a crisis involving a clutch of rowdy orphaned hatchlings, and was practically dead to the world.

This was just the most recent late night of many, and the three leaders were bone-weary. None of them were ready for dawn.

Of course it came anyway.

"Mom!" The young Night Fury, speaking her verbal approximation of the word that had no exact translation in dragon language, bounded through the skylight and poked Hiccup's head with her nose. "It's morning~! Time to fly!" When there was no response, she kept poking her 'mother' until Hiccup finally raised an arm to push her away. When the dragon barely budged, he burrowed down further under the blanket, clutching it over his head. "Moooooom!"

"Go away," came Hiccup's muffled voice. Freefall had learned quite a bit of Norse by now, and while she didn't have the right physical structure to speak much of it, she was still the only dragon who could understand most of what Vikings said.

"Mooooooooooooommmmm, it's morniiiiiiing, come flyyyyyyyyyy!"

Astrid's arm dragged over the bedside table, but even she was too tired to do more than give the first item her fingers closed on a half-hearted toss.

Freefall cocked her head in confusion - she was used to having things thrown at her whenever her 'aunt' was annoyed; it was a fun game to dodge them. She sniffed at both humans more closely. "Mom and Throws Things are very, very tired," she realized in disappointment. She took a second to express her feelings with a drooping posture, then brightened up and bounced over to where her 'father' lay. She poked Toothless's head, again using a verbal approximation in order to address him. "Daaaaaaaaad, it's morniiiiiiiiing!"

Toothless, eyes still closed, smacked her with a wing and then curled up with his face hidden.

"All the adults are too sleepy!" Freefall complained. "Hmph. I bet Storm Fly will fly with me. And Mother's Mother, and Cloud Jumper." She ran to dive back out the skylight and look for more entertaining companions.

Peace and quiet resumed...but only for a few minutes. Then a yellow and pink Monstrous Nightmare poked her head through the skylight. "Queen - I have news." The dragon's rider, a little girl about six years old, dropped from her neck to the edge of the skylight, where she crouched with perfect balance. "Dad, Mom," she called loudly, "there are ships."

The only response was some indistinct mumbling from Hiccup and Astrid.

"Dad?"

There was a sudden shriek of childish outrage from below. Distracted, Lily and Butterfly looked over the edge of the roof to the ground, then started laughing in unison. There was a series of thunking sounds. Child and dragon frowned, then scrambled backward and hissed, also in unison, when a furious nine-year-old boy hauled himself onto the roof.

Reaching up to grip the Terrible Terror that was gnawing at his leather shoulder armor, he jerked it free and hurled it at his sister, who caught the little creature with a cry of dismay. "Get your poisonous little RAT away from me! I'll \_kill\_ it if it ever comes near me again!"

"DADDY!" Lily immediately shrieked, "STOICK CALLED SHIMMERWING A RAT! AND HE SAID HE'D KILL HER!"

"MOM, LILY'S SHIMMER-RAT ATTACKED ME AGAIN! IT'S \_HER\_ FAULT!"

Toothless raised his head. "GO AWAY," he snarled at the noisy children.

In response, Lily ducked her head and crept onto Butterfly's neck to fly away.

Stoick, though he couldn't actually understand dragon language, was still perfectly capable of picking up on the Night Fury's irritation and commanding tone. "Don't boss me around, dragon! I'm the chief's son, you're just an animal!" Then he shrieked as Butterfly tossed a spout of flame at him over her shoulder. "MOM, LILY'S MONSTER SET THE HOUSE ON FIRE AGAIN!"

Astrid literally fell out of bed, crawled across the floor, dragged herself out the skylight to join her son on the roof, flung a bludgeon at the closest fire prevention trigger, then crawled back to curl up in bed beside her husband without even waiting to watch water start pouring down.

Stoick growled as he moved across the roof, stamping his boot on the few stray flames that had been missed. Since both his parents and even the head Night Fury seemed to be pretty useless at the moment, he finally climbed back down to find something more interesting to do.

After a while, Astrid murmured, "Maybe we should get up..."

"Yeah...in five minutes," Hiccup mumbled back. Their hands slowly clasped together, and they sort of attempted a kiss, but both of them fell back asleep before the gesture could be completed.

The next visitor was another Night Fury, this one a little younger than Freefall and midnight-blue in color. He entered the room almost without a sound, making his way over to the humans with catlike delicacy. "Sire's Half," he said, nuzzling Hiccup in an attempt to rouse him, "I want to bring Your attention to something."

"Morning, Daydream," Hiccup murmured, caressing the young dragon's nose with sleepy affection.

Daydream gazed at him for a moment, confused. \_"...Maybe You are not completely awake yet, Sire's Half.\_

"Mmm..."

Daydream finally gave up and crossed the room to see if he'd have better luck with his father. \_"Consort-sire, I want to bring your attention to something.\_"

Toothless gave a great sigh, but reluctantly uncurled and raised his head. Though he wasn't particularly fond of his biological firstborn, he still very much preferred Daydream to the other, more rambunctious hatchlings and children. \_"What do you want?"\_ he grumbled.

\_ "Queen is too sleepy to listen to me, but I think that what I have to tell you is important.\_"

Toothless looked over at the humans' bed, confirmed that Hiccup was failing to be a proper queen at the moment, did a dragon eyeroll, then yawned and sat up so he could cover for his queen as usual.

\_ "What is it?"\_

\_ "Foreign humans are coming. Our human flockmates are both agitated and excited, so I don't know whether it's good or bad. I want to ask Elder Dragonheart or Humanheart, but I think they both are gone playing, and Lily is too busy fighting with her litter-mate to listen to me. I don't know where Hatchling Warrior is.\_"

\_ "Useless humans,"\_ Toothless grumbled, including Freefall in that category. He rose to his paws and stretched, then padded to the skylight. Daydream followed him out.

Minutes later, another Monstrous Nightmare landed on the roof, this one red and black. His ten-year-old rider dropped to the floor with graceful form, though she made a heavy thud upon landing. The girl strode over to the bed, stepped onto it, and stood over her half-asleep brother. "Hiccup," she boomed pleasantly as the bed creaked in protest at the sudden added weight, "Patrols spotted the Elysian fleet approaching. They'll be here in about an hour."

Hiccup and Astrid's eyes popped open in unison. They stared at each other for a second, then struggled to sit up. Halla stepped back to give them some room.

"\_Elysians\_?!" Hiccup exclaimed. "An HOUR?!"

"They're not due for another week, at least!" Astrid gasped in dismay.

"I rode out Boneripper to greet them - and yes, I had backup, but it was fine. The captain said they'd skipped over one of their planned stops and decided to just head straight here."

Shadows darkened the room as Valka and a whole crowd of dragons descended. "Hiccup," she called urgently through the skylight, "we need to ready the village to receive visitors now."

Night Furies were raining down from the ceiling. \_"Mom~ You're FINALLY awake!"\_ Freefall exulted, leaping to plant her front paws on the bed and give her mother an enthusiastic lick on the face.

In the process, Astrid, who had been on the verge of climbing out of bed, was knocked back horizontal. "Get off me, you little brat!" Astrid exclaimed in exasperation, elbowing Freefall in the chest.

\_ "Half Of Me, hurry, sleep time is over, time to be queen now,"\_ Toothless said, shoving into Hiccup's other side with a mixture of urgency and regret. He, too, would have very much appreciated the chance to sleep in.

\_ "I knew I was right, I knew everyone should have listened to me,"\_ Daydream said unhappily, \_ "I am upset, I should do something but I don't know what, Queen please give me orders..."\_

Hiccup, half-crushed by dragons, was barely able to move. "Help...!" Halla reached down, seized his arm, and hauled him free as effortlessly as if she was a grown man. \_ 'I might be Dad's firstborn son,'\_ Hiccup thought wryly, \_ 'but you're the one who actually took after him...' \_

Hiccup started to head for the stairs, but Toothless seized him, tossed him onto his back, and simply jumped down to ground level with him. Astrid stared down at herself and the bed in dismay. "Uugghh, what a mess, remind me to never sleep in dirty battle gear again..." There wasn't time to change the bedding, though; there wasn't even time for a proper bath. Astrid hastily discarded her armor and squinted up at the skylight. Most of the dragons had either followed Hiccup or flown off the roof, but she was glad to see her own dragon peering in at her curiously. "Stormfly! Hey, girl, let's go find the closest body of water I can dunk myself into..."

Downstairs, Valka had started putting together a quick breakfast for the children. Stoick and Lily, instead of setting the table like they were supposed to, had apparently gotten distracted trying to gouge each other's eyes out with spoons; Shimmerwing perched on her human's shoulder and scolded Stoick enthusiastically.

"Guys, cut it out, would you?" Hiccup called distractedly from across the room, where he was trying to groom his beard into something befitting a strong leader rather than something that looked like Terrible Terrors would be happy nesting in. Freefall was rooting around in the closet, trying to disentangle the chieftain's cloak from the winter clothes.

Toothless, after a spoon came flying at him and bounced off his shoulder, snarled at the human children. He seized Lily's tunic in his mouth and dragged her off to deposit her at one end of the table, but when he went back for Stoick, the boy roared at him and tried to flee out the window.

Unfortunately for him, it was the same window Butterfly was lounging outside, and she raised in her head in curiosity just in time for Stoick to jump smack into it. The Monstrous Nightmare roared and shook Stoick off; he landed in the basket of fish that Halla had just opened. The surrounding dragons, displeased at having their breakfast

interrupted, all screeched and shoved Stoick back out again. "I HATE dragons!" he shouted, prompting Halla to grab him and dangle him in the air before her face.

"What have I told you about insulting our flockmates?" she growled.

Stoick, though wanting to scoff at the idea of humans being in a 'flock' as if they were dragons, wasn't in the mood to tick off his very strong aunt. Halla was only fun to fight with when she didn't actually care what they were fighting about. "Sorry," he grumbled.

Valka leaned out the window, holding out a bowl invitingly. "Come eat, Stoick love," she said.

Astrid came striding back into the house, the bloodstains gone from her skin and hair even though they still showed in dark patches on her wet clothes. Stormfly peered through the doorway after her and squawked curiously. Empress, having found Astrid bathing and followed her home, poked her head into the house, but hissed at seeing it so crowded and backed out again.

\_ "Throws Things! I found your queen fur,"\_ Freefall chirped, flinging it in Astrid's path. The Viking woman yelped as she tried to avoid stepping on the chieftain's cloak. \_ "I did a good thing! Praise me!"\_

"Astrid, would you like-?" Valka started to ask, holding up another serving.

"Can't eat yet, have to find a change of clothes...!" Astrid called, diving up the stairs. Hiccup, having finally gotten his beard into decent shape, hurried after her, and was followed by Toothless and Freefall.

Outside, Daydream finished eating his fish, peered into the house, saw that the humans on the ground floor were simply eating, then climbed up to the roof. His mother was lounging there, peering through the skylight. \_ "Are Queen and Consort-sire in there?"\_

\_ "Yes. Why is everyone riled up?"\_ Empress said disapprovingly. \_ "I flew out with our guardians to intercept the foreigners, but they weren't hostile. Why are the humans upset?"\_

\_ "Humanheart isn't worried-\_ though, granted, Freefall was almost \_never\_ worried about anything, even when she ought to be...\_ "-and Consort-sire is only worried because his other half is. I think it is just a human thing."\_

\_ "Too silly. This is a very stupid flock,"\_ Empress grumbled, resting her head on her front paws in dissatisfaction. \_ "I want to play with Interesting Thing, but she is too busy."\_

Daydream slipped down into the room, where Hiccup was trying to fend off Freefall as he donned the cloak he only wore on formal occasions, a beautiful thing embroidered with dragon scales that was cumbersome and got in the way whenever he was trying to actually interact with dragons. Toothless was letting Astrid brace against him as she

wrestled her feet into her nicer pair of boots.

"They are putting on their special skins and feathers," Daydream observed. "There is someone they are trying to impress. The foreign humans. Our queens want to impress them."

"Our queens always impress foreign humans," Toothless asserted proudly, "even when they don't try. Our flock is very special, no other flock is like ours."

"Mother thinks that's a bad thing."

"Mate is wrong, because it's a good thing." Toothless's language was full of undertones of flying and love and safety and pride. Daydream liked that, and decided that he would side with his father in this disagreement rather than his mother.

"Does my hair look okay?" Astrid asked anxiously, tying off the end of her braid. "I combed it and tried to smooth it down, but it's still damp and I know it's going to look worse when it dries—"

"You're beautiful, chief," Hiccup said, kissing her. Since she was still close to Toothless, they leaned heavily on the black dragon as they took a moment out of the crazy morning to just enjoy each other and bask in the reassurance of their love and togetherness.

"Why do they like to court on me?" Toothless complained, heaving his shoulders in an attempt to dislodge them.

"Awwwww, Mom and His mate love each other so very a lot much! I am happy!" Freefall crooned, going to drape her neck across Daydream as she watched. Daydream craned his head to give her a wary look, not sure how to react. The skylight was now clear, since Empress had flown away in disgust.

By the time the two leaders of Berk had made it back downstairs to grab a bite to eat, Valka and Stoick were already gone, and Lily was packing provisions into a basket. "How long are the Elysians going to be here?" the girl asked.

"We're thinking about a week, but who knows," Astrid said, going to fill a bowl for herself.

"Whether they're gone or not, check back with us in exactly one week, okay?" Hiccup said, hugging his daughter goodbye.

"Nrgh..."

"You don't have to let them see you if they're still here, just check in somewhere so we know you're all right."

"Okay. I love you, Daddy," Lily said, kissing his nose. She let go and went to hug her mother. "Bye, Mom."

Hiccup told Daydream to accompany the travelers, then scooped the Terror off Lily's shoulder and went to the window to call for Lily's Nightmare as well. "Butterfly, Day Dream, Shimmer Wing, keep my offspring very safe," he ordered.

"OF COURSE we will," the dragons chorused, Butterfly impatiently, Shimmerwing indignantly, and Daydream indulgently, since Hiccup gave them the same strict order every single time they left the nest, even though it should have been obvious that they would take good care of the youngest and weakest member of their little troop whether Hiccup told them to or not.

"Don't forget your axe," Astrid was saying.

"Mom, I've got three dragons with me, I don't need-"

"Take the axe," Astrid snapped. "Or a bludgeon or a blade or something. You need to be prepared for ANYTHING, not just anything your dragons can handle."

"Uuuuggghhh..."

"You never know, Lily," Hiccup said mildly, handing over a weapon. "There's a few things that humans do have to protect dragons from. Just take this so we'll feel better, okay?"

"Okay, Daddy."

Astrid rolled her eyes in exasperation at how easily Hiccup could always get Lily to obey him.

The little girl, accompanied by her dragon entourage, started to leave, and nearly crashed into her brother coming in. "Watch where you're going!" Lily snapped.

"You're the one with the fat hulking monsters; tell them to watch where they're going!"

Lily swiped her little bludgeon at Stoick's head; Stoick whipped out his training blade, countering so forcefully that Lily's weapon flew out of her hand and narrowly missed a Gronckle passing nearby. Lily flung herself at Stoick, knocking him off balance as she was cheered on by Shimmerwing.

"Fight! Fight! Fight!" Freefall screamed in excitement. "Who will win?! Who?!"

"This is a bad fight, Stupid," Toothless snapped, seeing the displeasure of the children's parents.

Stoick shoved Lily away. She sprang at him with a roar and he readied himself to defend, but Daydream snatched Lily out of the air and deposited her on Butterfly's back.

"I can't shoot him?" Butterfly said wistfully.

"Just go away," Hiccup said in a mix of amusement and exasperation. Butterfly tossed her head and obeyed.

Stoick stabbed his blade at the wall to express his frustration, then rounded on his parents and cried, "That stupid Nightmare is at it AGAIN, he's chasing the yaks around on purpose just because he thinks it's FUNNY to get yelled at by the herders...!"

\_ "Chase yaks,"\_ Freefall echoed wistfully.

\_ "Chasing our yaks is bad, too,"\_ Toothless warned.

\_ "BAD."\_

Freefall flopped down at his feet and wriggled on her back, smiling a dragon-smile up at her adoptive father in sheepish apology. \_"I will not chase our yaks. I am a very good dragon. Can I find foreign yaks to chase? Please please pleeeeaaase?"\_

"'That Nightmare'...you mean Fireworm?" Hiccup asked.

"DUH, Fireworm! All those overgrown fire pits are total menaces, but That One is the WORST, you should have him put down or something, he's basically a wild dragon so WHY do you keep letting him run around Berk as if he owns the place?!"

"Fireworm is in our flock, Stoick," Hiccup tried to explain yet again. "He accepted me as his queen, so I can't just kick him out unless he does something really bad-"

"Scaring the cattle out of their minds is BAD, Dad!"

"Well, to humans, yeah, but these are dragons we're talking about, they're-"

"If you want them to LIVE here then they have to follow the RULES, it doesn't matter if they're dragons! You're their chief, so go make them behave!"

\_ 'The same way I can make you behave?'\_ Hiccup thought in irritation. "Do you have any idea how hard it is to counter basic animal instincts?! I have to figure out how to put it in terms they'll understand even though half our human concepts aren't even translatable, and even then, they have minds of their own, Stoick! And Nightmares are particularly-"

"If you won't teach him a lesson, then I will!" Stoick yanked his sword back out of the wall and whirled toward the door.

\_ "Brother is going to provoke Fire Worm, and they will have a very fun fight and get in very much trouble,"\_ Freefall remarked with a dragon-smirk. Toothless groaned in anticipation of the mess he and Hiccup would need to prevent or at least clean up.

"Stoick!" Hiccup shouted, knowing that picking a fight with a Monstrous Nightmare was guaranteed to end in chaos and destruction. There were ways to approach and handle dragons of various breeds and temperaments, and it was frustrating that even after nine years of being taught by the best dragonmasters in the known world, Stoick still had no idea how to-

"Hey, Stoick." Astrid set a hand on her son's shoulder, and he paused to look up at her. "You know that brute force doesn't work on Fireworm, or even with most Nightmares in general. Instead of picking a fight with Fireworm when the Elysians are right on our doorstep, let's just go find something to distract him with until your grandmother can deal with him, okay?"

Stoick exhaled, calming down at once. "Okay. I'm glad someone

around here knows how to handle a crisis..."

Hiccup silently threw his hands in the air, at a loss as to how easily Astrid could get Stoick to listen to reason.

By the time the Elysian flagship sailed into the harbor, there was no sign of the frantic whirlwind of activity that had preceded its arrival. The dragon patrol escorts gracefully swooped around and headed back out to keep an eye on the rest of the fleet. Many of the villagers had turned out to watch, accompanied by their various dragon friends and partners.

Valka, in her full dragon warrior regalia, loomed with Cloudjumper from a nearby cliff top like some kind of ancestral guardian. Halla, bearing no visible weapons but with her formal armor shining brightly in the sun, stood straight-backed and perfectly balanced on a Thunderdrum that was slowly cruising through the water. Of course Hiccup, Astrid, Toothless, and Stormfly were at the head of the welcoming party, and Freefall posed near her mother with her wings half spread and her expression uncharacteristically stern, having learned from experience that most foreign humans found this impressive and intimidating.

Two men, also in formal wear, disembarked with their entourage, all glancing uneasily at the surrounding dragons.

"Welcome to Berk," Astrid said. "Lord Andor, I presume?"

"That is correct," one of the men answered with a small bow. "This is Commander Spiro. We greet Berk in peace."

"That's good to know," Hiccup remarked.

Astrid hid a smile. "Shall we head up to the Great Hall and take some refreshment before you tell us your business?"

"Ah...yes, thank you, my lady..."

Astrid gave orders for the ships to be looked after, and led the way up to the Great Hall. Valka and Cloudjumper vanished like ghosts; Halla called to a nearby Hobblegrunt to give her a lift to the Hall. The watching Berkians either returned to their normal business or started ambling toward the Great Hall as well.

"Magnificent creatures," Lord Andor commented bravely as Freefall dogged his steps and sniffed curiously at his sleeve. "We'd heard tell that your island was filled with tamed dragons, but had no idea of the true extent of your mastery of the beasts."

"Dragons are people," Hiccup said. "Once you stop assuming the worst and try to actually get to know them, it's like finding an entire new world that you never even knew existed."

"Just look at them," Commander Spiro marveled, "thousands of pounds of fire-breathing menace, yet you've got them eating out of your hands like dogs."

"Not dogs," Freefall huffed. "And there is no food in your paws, you boring human." Hiccup patted her head soothingly, and she purred.

The commander paused, then started reaching out a hand toward the young Night Fury.

"He is very scared," Freefall laughed, though the man seemed perfectly composed as far as the humans could tell. "I will tease him."

"Don't," Hiccup ordered.

Freefall pouted, but then purred her love for her mother and obediently let the commander touch her head and then give her a small pat.

"Extraordinary," the man murmured.

Freefall bared all her teeth in a silent mock-snarl, and laughed again when he hurriedly backed away.

"Let's just get up to the Hall so we can eat," Astrid said meaningfully. Since Freefall wasn't wearing a saddle at the moment and there was nothing to grab hold of to drag her away, Astrid planted a hand on the dragon's neck instead, and kept it pressed there hard in warning as she inserted herself between Freefall and the visitors.

"It was only a little tease," Freefall grumbled. "Very little."

Once the visitors had been refreshed after their journey, the two foreign leaders took a walk on the outskirts of the village with the two Berk leaders, who were trailed as usual by their dragon partners.

"Now, sir, if we could get down to business..." Lord Andor finally said after some meaningless pleasantries.

"Yes, we were wondering when you'd get to that," Astrid said.

"We actually had two purposes in coming here," said the commander. "If I could have a private word with you, my lady, as my lord speaks to the chief..."

Astrid frowned. "You both want to talk to me in private?"

"No, madam," Andor clarified, "it's only Spiro who has business with you. I myself am here on an entirely different matter, which I'd like to discuss with Berk's chief."

"Yeah. I'm Berk's chief," Astrid said.

The men stared.

Hiccup smiled a little as he guessed the misunderstanding. "You want to talk to the leader of the dragons, right?" he said to the commander. "That'd be me."

"I...I beg your- What?"

Astrid rolled her eyes. "I'm the chief of Berk, me, Astrid

Hofferson. I'm the leader of the humans in this village, so if you're here on human business, I'll be the one calling the shots on that, thank you very much."

"But if it's dragons you're here about," Hiccup said, raising his hand with a small grin, "I'm your man."

"But- But you're-?! \*ahem\* We were told it was a great dragon queen who lived on Berk, a human with an entire flock of the creatures under her command..."

"Yeah, and that's me."

"Hiccup's the whole reason we have trained dragons in the first place," Astrid said, leaning back on Toothless with her arm affectionately hugging his neck.

The men stared at them suspiciously, as if they thought the Berkians were trying to trick them.

"Here, you want me to prove it?" Hiccup stepped away and shouted down toward the village, solely for the visitors' benefit, "I AM QUEEN!" Then he roared out the same thing in dragon language, having adapted it into a sound he could actually make. The makeshift signal tended to confuse wild dragons, but his own flock recognized it instantly. Hiccup and Astrid were already covering their ears as, first Toothless and Stormfly, then every single dragon who'd pledged itself to Hiccup, bellowed back obeisance in response.

"WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR QUEEN!"

Freefall came zooming up the hill toward them. "Mom! Mom! Something exciting is happening?! We're going to fly, we're going to hunt, we're going to fight?!"

"No, Freefall," he chuckled, trying to stay on his feet as the young Night Fury head-butted him and nuzzled him forcefully. Switching to dragon language, he explained, "I'm just trying to impress the foreigners."

"Ohhhh." She plopped down on her haunches. "Boring."

"They are impressed," Toothless smirked.

"And a little upset," Stormfly observed.

"It doesn't work with me, see?" Astrid told Andor and Spiro. She turned toward the village and shouted, "I am queen!" There was a distant muttering of confusion from the Vikings who'd heard her, and absolutely no response from the dragons.

Freefall, who was the only dragon to understand the words, rolled onto her back and screeched with laughter. "Throws Things says she is queen, but she is not! It's a funny joke!"

"HOOLIGAN TRIBE!" Astrid then bellowed. "BERK STANDS FOREVER!"

"LONG LIVE BERK!" many Viking voices roared back, swelling in volume as the more distant villagers overheard the shouting of the closer ones. "LONG LIVE CHIEF ASTRID!"

Hiccup stepped up beside her. "Long live Chief Hiccup!" he shouted. All he got in response was some hearty laughter from the Vikings within earshot.

Husband and wife then turned back to the visitors, eyebrows raised, shoulders touching, surrounded by loyal dragon companions.

There was a long silence.

"Still not convinced?" Hiccup finally said. "Because we can—"

"No— Er, no." Lord Andor bowed stiffly. "I suppose it's you I need to speak with, my lady."

"As long as you don't mind my dragon tagging along. Come on, Stormfly," Astrid beckoned.

Hiccup, resting his hands on the Night Furies on either side of him, cocked his head at the commander. "Soooo, was there something you wanted my dragons to do for you?"

"Well...if you really do master them, then yes. We've found ourselves in a difficult situation, and when considering possible allies, we were told of your island and thought perhaps..."

Hiccup and Astrid, in their respective elements and dealing with their specialties, were soon able to resolve both issues in Berk's favor.

"We have the very much best flock,"\_ Freefall said in satisfaction as she watched her family going to bed that night. "Our dragon-and-human flock with a dragon queen and a human queen who love each other. Very much best flock \_ever\_."

"Hiccup...make her be quiet before I kick her out..."

"Go to sleep, Freefall..."

o.o.o

Author's Notes: "Sire" in this context means "male parent." Daydream's name for Toothless changes slightly when he gets older, but he's still young in this fic and his personal sense of humor hasn't developed as much.

"Elder Dragonheart" is Valka, "Hatchling Warrior" is Halla, "Young Dragonheart" is Lily, and "Humanheart" is Freefall. They and Hiccup are the only ones fluent enough in both human and dragon language to have more than just basic communication between species. (...I just realized that Hiccup is the only one of them who's male, LOL.) "Interesting Thing" is what Empress calls Astrid.

I tried to look up whether Viking brides took on the family names of their husbands or not (or vice versa), but I couldn't find any information on that. For simplicity's sake, and because it did say that a woman was still considered to belong to her father's family even after marrying, I just let Astrid keep her maiden name.

In my fics, a dragon will capitalize the pronouns of both his/her

Most Important Person and his/her queen or alpha. Also, Berk's dragons, especially Freefall, make up a lot of compound words to express human concepts, such as the words for "brother" or "mother." I tend to translate dragon language into English more by the characters' meaning rather than trying to stick to a more exact, word-for-word translation. (If you want an absolutely fantastic example of dragon language that's translated word-for-word, go read Nightfall by Le'letha; it's one of the best HTTYD fanfics I've ever seen. X3)

The more I see the development of Hiccup as a Viking chief in both versions of canon (the books and the animation), the more I think that, yeah, Cressida Cowell and Dean DeBlois know what they're doing, Hiccup'll probably be a great chief, and it's a very solid and meaningful literary storyline even though I can't help thinking he'd still be happier playing with dragons his whole life. But I still like to experiment with the dragon queen idea because Hiccup does seem way more at home among dragons than humans, and I honestly think that Astrid would naturally make a great chief (whereas Hiccup doesn't have a natural affinity for it), and...basically, I don't really favor one interpretation over the other, since I like them both.

\*looking up some things while quick-editing\* OH MY GOSH, I just found an interview where America Ferrera playfully says that Astrid's going to be chief in HTTYD3! XD XD Come on, Dean, even one of your own main actors wants a woman to lead the Vikings...! I swear, it would solve everyone's problems if Astrid actually did become chief. ^^;

This one-shot merged two ideas... One was the Dragon Queen of Berk idea I'd had where foreign visitors mistake Hiccup for the Viking chief and Astrid for the dragon queen. The other idea was a plunny where an exhausted Hiccup & Astrid are dragged out of bed by their kids and then frantically rush around getting ready to receive important visitors. In hindsight, I can't even think why those two ideas didn't start out as the same one. XD

I'm kicking myself for not just putting all my canon-based HTTYD fanfiction in the same series - now I wrote this fic and couldn't decide whether it should go with the Dragon Queen of Berk stories or the Two Worlds, One Family ones. \*sweatdrop\* Ended up going with TWOF because it's easier to follow for people who've read the other TWOF stories but not the Dragon Queen ones, whereas it'd be more difficult the other way around.

Ftr, an older Daydream appears in my divergent fic Until We Meet At The Table Of Kings. Oh! Speaking of which, I was gonna talk about Daydream more in these author's notes, wasn't I. I think mostly about his name - ftr, Hiccup was not the one who named him; and in real life, his name was inspired by the "Toothless Daydream," a made-up dragon breed in the HTTYD book series. (In the books, Toothless is tiny and very unimpressive-looking; so when Stoick was displeased by his son's meager dragon-capturing accomplishment, Fishlegs, who is Hiccup's best friend in the books, made Stoick feel better by falsely claiming that Toothless is actually a very rare breed called a Toothless Daydream rather than the Common or Garden dragon he actually looks like.)

Halla and her Nightmare, Boneripper, aren't official partners, because Halla's always had her eye on a different breed to partner

with; but they are friends. And ftr, Halla is graceful and has an affinity for dragons like her mom, but apparently got all the body type genes from her dad that had skipped over Hiccup.

Lily doesn't get along well with humans. Her parents try to train her to be social with other archipelago tribes, but more distant foreigners are too much for her at this point, so they let her escape these sorts of events until she's older.

Although Japanese honorifics can be a bit frustrating to write in fanfiction if you don't know what everyone calls each other, once you do find out, I think it's absolutely fascinating. You can tell a lot about characters' relationships just based on the way they address each other. The way I've found myself writing dragon-talk seems to do something similar; it is unfortunately confusing, but I still like how dragons the way I imagine them don't really have permanent names, and that what they're called depends on who's addressing them, their relationship, and sometimes even the dragon's mood.

## 5. Dragonskin

Dragonskin

(rough draft)

A DreamWorks' How to Train Your Dragon fanfic by Raberba girl

Summary: Stoick Jr. finds a way to protect himself which is not looked upon favorably by his family.

o.o.o

Stoick the Second didn't bother to keep track of his ordinary scars. It was only the dragon scars that he kept mentally catalogued, and which held the memories of every single incident where a dragon had caused him pain.

The worst one was a burn mark on his chest, from when a sick Gronckle had coughed when he was standing too close to it. Lava had sprayed everywhere, a small chunk of it and several smaller flecks searing through nine-year-old Stoick's clothing and reaching his skin.

The adults nearby had acted quickly, so the injury had not been serious. However, the pain had been intense, and the hysterical boy had refused to let any dragons lick the wound, so it had not healed as well as it should have. After that, he never went anywhere without armor, even in his own home.

Stoick was now fourteen. Leather had its limits and metal was too cumbersome, but he irritably put up with either one or the other, because he had to have something to help defend him against the dangerous, spiky, fanged, freaking fire-breathing beasts that were an inescapable fact of life in his village.

Even when he tried to escape, roaming the woods frequently in order to avoid a situation at home that he didn't like (much as his father had once done when he himself was a boy), a dragon babysitter would

usually get sent after him, which (as Stoick often yelled at his father during one of their many arguments) defeated the whole purpose.

"Why can't you just TRUST ME?!"

"I DO trust you!"

"No, you don't! I'm fourteen years old, I can take care of myself, Dad!"

"I know you can, but I'd feel better if-!"

"YOU used to tramp around in the woods all day TOTALLY ALONE when you were my age, and you were fine!"

"Dumb luck! Do you know how many times I nearly died as a kid?!"

"I'M NOT YOU, DAD!"

"WELL THAT'S THUNDERINGLY OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT!"

The argument had ended, as many of their arguments did, with Stoick storming out. A little while later, he'd noticed a Windstriker tailing him, and it had taken him half an hour to ditch it.

Now, at last, there was enough peace and quiet for him to think. Stoick wandered aimlessly for a little while, but soon got restless and started hunting instead. He downed a bird and started a fire. By the time his meal was ready to eat, he was calming down and finally managing to think of things that weren't how much he hated being trapped in the dragon's nest they called a 'village' or how annoying his dad was.

It was the next morning, when Stoick was finally heading back home, that he found the downed Zippleback.

Stoick inspected it carefully, relieved to find it completely dead. Flies had gathered, and the first few scavengers had come to pick at the most convenient edible bits. It would have been an unpleasant war of conscience if Stoick had had to try to help the injured reptile.

"Okay, so...you're dead...that means you won't mind if I..." Stoick thoughtfully drew his knife. He considered for a moment, then nodded. Zipplebacks were large; there would be enough for both a cloak and some pieces of armor. "Move, guys," he said, flapping his hand at the scavengers. "Let me finish, then you can have the rest. I'll leave you the best parts, I promise."

o.o.o.o.o

Stoick was rather proud of himself when he came strolling back into town. He had an idea that his family wouldn't really be happy with what he had done, but he'd already reasoned out what he'd say to them and how he'd appeal to his mother for support. She would understand, right? He needed some kind of real protection if he was going to have to keep living in this place, and the stupid dragon had been dead already, it wasn't like he'd hurt it-

All his plans were for how he would explain himself to his family. He hadn't even thought about how Berk's dragons might react to seeing him draped in the flayed skin of one of their own kind.

Of course it was Fireworm who attacked first.

It was almost sheer instinct that had Stoick flinging the top of his new cloak up over his head when the blast came at him, and then he was running for his life, cursing as he tried to get a good grip on his axe. This seemed deadlier than their usual fights, though Stoick was too distracted and not sensitive enough to discern why.

Ordinarily, the black Monstrous Nightmare would usually stomp after Stoick with a mischievous glint in his eye, heavy-footed with sloppy form, and shooting sparingly. This was different. Fireworm's expression now was outraged; he was frighteningly swift, kept tight control of every movement, and attacked with no warning, gushing so much fire that he would soon run out.

By the time he did, Stoick had regained his wits. The boy waited for the last shot, dodge-rolled out of its range, then charged at the Nightmare with a fierce war cry. Fireworm roared back and reared to meet him. Stoick hurled his axe, which would have struck the dragon right in his exposed heart if Fireworm hadn't jerked aside, dropping back to all four sets of claws. Stoick drew his sword without missing a beat and swung it when he was close enough.

Fireworm caught the blade in his teeth and ripped it out of the boy's hands. Then, swinging his head back, he spewed - a fist-sized lump of fire, which splatted to the ground between the opponents.

"That's all you got, you rotten lizard?!" Stoick shrieked, too wildly to be gleeful. "Come on! Come-!" A large fist smashed across his jaw, sending him crashing to the ground. At the same time, a smaller black dragon tackled Fireworm.

"WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?" Halla screamed, seizing the dragonskin cloak and ripping it away from Stoick's shoulders. "THIS IS ZIPPLEBACK HIDE, IF YOU KILLED IT STOICK I WILL MURDER YOU-!"

Fireworm, meanwhile, was cowering before his alpha, the only person he respected enough to bow his head to.

"THAT IS MY OTHER HALF'S CHILD THAT HE LOVES,"\_ Toothless raged, \_"KILLING HIM IS NOT ALLOWED, KILLING FLOCKMATES IS NOT ALLOWED, KILLING ANYTHING ANYTHING ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO HALF OF ME IS NOT ALLOWED...!"\_

Halla had thrown the cloak aside and was now, horrified, holding the bundle extra skin that Stoick had brought for his armor. "You KILLED a dragon, Stoick?! You killed it?! You killed it?!"

Now Hiccup was gripping Stoick's collar with both hands, screaming at him and shaking him. "How could you do this, Stoick, what could have possibly made you think this was okay-?!"

"I DIDN'T KILL IT!" Stoick was yelling, "I DIDN'T, it was ALREADY

DEAD, get off me! Let go of me! I hate you!" Astrid finally managed to shove her way between them, and Stoick was ashamed when tears of relief started to spill down his cheeks at the sight of his mother. "Mom—"

"Hiccup, get \_back\_," Astrid ordered, "back \_off\_, this \_isn't helping\_."

Behind them, Butterfly was snarling; the only reason she hadn't attacked was to avoid hurting Lily, who was huddling into her and sobbing.

Valka's face was white and she seemed to be literally weak with horror, holding onto two dragons to help her stay upright. Stoick couldn't bring himself to look at her. Cloudjumper was curled protectively around his partner, slit-eyed as he growled at Stoick. Daydream, sitting on Valka's other side with her hand on his shoulder, watched his human clutchmate with narrowed, disapproving eyes. Stoick flinched, as bothered by the loss of respect from the one of the very few dragons he liked as he was by the sight of his grandmother in such pain.

Freefall had been sniffing at the cloak. "It's two-head skin! Why did you take it off of him, Brother? I think you are scared of dragons, but don't be scared, it's okay, I'll protect you~ Fire Worm, I think it's okay, Brother didn't kill this two-head." No one except Daydream, who saw no reason to respond, was paying the least attention to her.

Once the raging chaos had faded down to angry, uneasy restlessness, all eyes were fixed on Stoick. Astrid, blocking Hiccup's way and pressing her forearm across his chest to hold him back, pointed her axe at her son and said flatly, "Explain yourself."

"I-! I-!"

"Why would you come here \_draped in dragonskin\_?" Hiccup exploded.

"Hiccup, shut up," his wife ordered. "Right now is \_Stoick's\_ time to speak."

"DRAGO BLUDVIST wore dragonskin, every day he'd walk past his slaves and they'd have to smell the-!"

"HICCUP, SHUT UP."

Freefall trotted over with the cloak in her mouth and dropped it into her brother's lap, then purred and rubbed her face against his head to comfort him, because she knew how much he hated licking. Stoick picked up the cloak and buried his face in it.

"Stoick, you don't have time to pull yourself together," Astrid said briskly. "Defend yourself. Why, where, how." Then, after a pause, "\_Now\_."

Stoick sucked in a deep breath, then surged to his feet and defiantly swept the cloak back around himself. He didn't even notice when he rested a hand on his dragon sister's neck as if to draw strength from her. "I-It was \_already dead\_," he said, hating himself for the

tremor in his voice. "It was already dead, I didn't kill it! I, I need it, a cloak like this, they-! You all are-! I NEED IT!"

He gasped and tried to stumble away when Toothless marched straight at him, but there was nowhere to go - Freefall, not understanding his fear, didn't budge, but simply gave him a curious look. Pinned between the two Night Furies, Stoick shut his eyes and tried not to whimper as Toothless examined him, sniffing and nudging. "Dad, call him off," Stoick said tightly. "Call him off!"

Hiccup flung out his hands, angry and annoyed. "Stoick, when, in your entire life, has Toothless ever tried to hurt you?"

"Get away from me!" Stoick shrieked. He didn't quite dare touch Toothless, and found himself pressing back hard against his sister instead. This time Freefall did lick him a little, on his clothes where he wouldn't mind as much, and wedged her head up under his armpit for support.

Toothless finally backed away with a little huff. "Elderly male two-head; killed by a spinetail in a food dispute. He was already dead when Alphacub tore off his skin."

Many of the dragons dispersed at this, grumbling. Fireworm stayed crouched where he was, growling a little in displeasure, but relaxed somewhat. Valka collapsed against Cloudjumper in relief, and Lily went from grieving to furious scolding.

Astrid finally released Hiccup, who exhaled and ran a hand through his hair. "Okay," he said, reaching out to Toothless for comfort when his partner returned to his side. "Okay, fine, Stoick, you didn't kill him. I'm...that's...it's better than- What it could have been."

"Just jumping to conclusions like that, even though I told you, I'm not the enemy here-!"

"I wasn't finished, Stoick," Hiccup thundered.

"I didn't do anything wrong! You can't punish me!"

"Who said I was going to punish you?! Fine, you didn't do anything wrong, but you did something stupid, and right now you are going to head straight for the nearest cliff and drop that thing into the ocean!"

"WHAT?!"

"You can't seriously think you'll get to KEEP it!"

Astrid pressed her hand over Hiccup's mouth and gave him a significant look. "Does yelling at Stoick ever help anything?" she murmured. Hiccup grumbled into her palm.

"It's MINE! I NEED it!"

"You can't keep it, Stoick," Halla said tightly. "Are you crazy? You can't wear it here!"

"Why not?!"

"It's a DRAGON'S SKIN, Stoick! How would you like it if a dragon started parading around the village wrapped up in a human being's skin?!"

Stoick stared at her in revulsion.

"Exactly!"

"I'm TIRED of this!" Stoick shouted. He let the cloak slide back off his shoulders, stripped off his armor, and yanked his tunic up over his head. "This!" he cried, pointing to a scar, "And this, and this! And the one on my back and the two others you can't see! They breathe fire, they burn people, they burn ME, and I'm going to protect myself!"

Toothless yawned, unable to follow the conversation and bored with the latest theatrics of his other half's excitable male offspring.

"Your dragon will protect you!" Lily screamed at her brother in a rage. "If you'd just get a dragon partner, you wouldn't-!"

"I DON'T WANT A DRAGON PARTNER!"

"Are they saying anything important?" Toothless asked the young Night Fury he refused to claim as a daughter.

"Everyone wants him to throw the skin away, but he says no no no no," Freefall translated.

"Alphacub is even crazier than Half Of Me... Why does he want it?"

"Scared of being burned; wants it to protect him."

Stoick looked around in annoyance at all the humans who had gone silent in order to follow the dragon conversation. "So, what, are we cool now? Everyone will get off my freaking back and leave me alone?"

"Half Of Me," Toothless said, worried, "dragons burn You?"

"It's okay," Hiccup said quickly, "very so much okay, I love dragons so so so much, small burns not important, it's okay."

Toothless sniffed at him closely, especially at his hands flecked with little scars, some of them from blacksmithing but others from dragon teeth or claws or spines. "Hurt You to be close to dragons..."

"Dragons THAT I LOVE. Pain in my heart from losing my dragons that I love very so much worse than little not-important pain in my flesh."

Toothless licked his cheek, then turned to look at Stoick. The boy had tried to leave while everyone was distracted, and was now raging because Freefall had pulled him down and draped her heavy forelegs

over him. "Quiet. Mom and Dad will decide what to do," she lectured.

"...Alphacub is not like You," Toothless said. "He doesn't love dragons, he's scared to be hurt, he has no heart-pain."

"Yeah," Hiccup admitted reluctantly. Toothless sighed.

"Get off of me! Stupid Freefall! Get off!"

"Stoick," Hiccup said.

Stoick glared at him, trying hard to not cry.

Toothless is the dragon alpha. He gets final say on the dragonskin. I'm the human alpha. I get final say on you."

"You're the chief, not a freaking 'alpha,'" Stoick grumbled under his breath.

Hiccup looked at his partner. "What do you say, bud?" he said quietly. "Throw away dragon skin?"

"...Alphacub is scared; he didn't hurt the two-head. He will throw away the skin if he wants to or keep the skin if he wants to."

Hiccup unhappily touched his forehead to the dragon's, wishing that Toothless had ordered the cloak to be thrown away and saved everyone some heartache. At least Stoick would be happy now...

"You can keep the cloak, son," Hiccup said heavily. "But only if you're willing to take the consequences of wearing it."

The lecture Stoick was forced to sit through was adapted into Berk's official laws. Anything made of dragon parts was banned without express permission from both the dragon alpha foremost and the human chief secondary. Punishment for breaking the law would be severe.

Stoick wore the dragonskin cloak constantly, and made a set of armor for himself that was light, comfortable, and fireproof. He strode around the village feeling safer and more confident, barely noticing and not at all caring that most dragons wouldn't come near him, and that the faction of rescues in particular would growl at him. Freefall still loved him as much as ever and Daydream soon got used to it, which was enough.

Eventually, the cloak came to smell more like Stoick than like the dragon it had once been, and the sight of it became so familiar that many forgot it was even dragonskin at all. One of those who never forgot was Hiccup. Sometimes, as Stoick slept, Hiccup would watch him and grieve and wonder in frustration how any child of his could possibly be so stubborn and insensitive about dragons.

"You're wondering why one of our children, one of your parents' grandchildren, is stubborn?" Astrid said wryly when Hiccup complained.

"Well, okay, fine, I guess the stubbornness is genetic; but the

dragon thing! Even my dad came around, so why can't my son?! The kid wasn't even born yet when we were still fighting dragons!"

"Stoick would have thrived during the war," Astrid mused.

"Yeah...he would have..." Hiccup shuddered a little. "He'd thrive as a dragon trapper, too, and that scares me."

"Freefall adores him, though."

"Freefall adores everybody," Hiccup snorted.

"Daydream likes him, too. I'm sure he can sense that Stoick has a good heart, otherwise he wouldn't put up with him."

"Yeah..." The thought made Hiccup feel better, enough to finally be able to fall asleep.

o.o.o

Author's Notes: It BOTHERS me that book-Hiccup wears dragonskin in the later books, especially since the problematic aspects of that are never addressed. That seems kind of sick to me.

Fireworm is the name of book-Snotlout's (female XD) dragon. (In the books, 'Hookfang' is actually the name of one of Stoick's dragons.) I just borrowed the name and the fact that he's a Nightmare, nothing else.

Stoick Jr.'s dragon name is supposed to mean something like, "person who acts as though he is the leader of the pack," or "self-appointed leader," or maybe a combination of "person who's so sure of his own way that he won't look for a different path" and "prince / firstborn offspring of half of our alpha," but I haven't yet thought of a better name than "Alphacub" to express that very well. Might change it later if I think of something better.

This story is an older idea I've had for months and months, but never got around to writing until now.

I was unhappy and discouraged about something in real life, so instead of doing anything productive or helpful, I wrote a low-priority fanfic instead. -.- I guess it's better than bingeing on food or shopping or whatever else people do to drown their sorrows, but still.

## 6. Name Change

Name Change

(rough draft)

A DreamWorks' How to Train Your Dragon fanfic by Raberba girl

Summary: Hiccup & Astrid's four-year-old daughter changes her name when she learns why Stoick never calls her by it.

\*\*A/N: THE KIDS IN THIS FIC ARE DIFFERENT THAN THE ONES I USUALLY USE!\*\* Will explain better at the end, but these are different OCs; Stoick Jr. & Lily are not in this fic.

\*\*This fic takes place shortly before HTTYD2, in an alternate scenario where Hiccup & Astrid got married soon after HTTYD1.\*\*

o.o.o

"That's all of them!" the little girl shrieked. "Close the gate, close the gate, close the gate!"

Her grandfather smiled as he shut the last of the sheep inside their pen.

"\_Bad\_ sheep. Don't you run away again," the child lectured, shaking her finger at the animals. "You want Fireworm to eat you because you're not in your pen, huh?"

"How many was that, Finn?" Stoick asked the girl's twin brother.

He stared up at his grandfather with wide eyes and said hesitantly, "Twenty...one...?"

"Aye! That's what I counted, too. Go ahead and write it down."

Looking relieved at having successfully kept track of the sheep, Finn carefully wrote the number down on the paper he was clutching.

"Thank you, Stoick," the herdsman said gratefully. "If it's not one thing, it's another." The Nadder at his side squawked at the sheep in a maternal way, then hissed and dipped her head aggressively when a black Monstrous Nightmare approached and peered over the wooden railing. The sheep bleated in fear and scurried away, huddling as close to the Nadder as they could get.

"No chasing sheep, Fireworm," the little girl lectured, climbing up onto the Nightmare's broad snout. "They're right where they belong, see? \_Me\_ and \_Finn\_ and \_Grandpa\_ herded them back home, so \_you\_ don't have any excuses, young man!"

Fireworm chuffed at her in good-natured disappointment.

"Finn, lass, come along," Stoick called. "We'll stop by and see how Gobber's doing in the forge, eh?"

The boy reached up to grasp a bit of Stoick's huge hand, and the girl nimbly climbed up to sit on his shoulder. "Grandpa, my name's Valka!"

"I know," he said gently. "Where's that Terror of yours got to, eh?"

"Ponybutt? I dunno. Finn, where's Ponybutt?"

"I don't know, either. He flew off with Sharpshot and Sneaky somewhere."

By the time they reached the forge, the young twins were having an argument about whether they would have to share a Zippelback or not when they got old enough to partner with dragons for real. Stoick was content to let them argue, and exchanged a smile with Gobber as they entered.

"Ah, it's Finn and the lass!" Gobber greeted.

"Uncle Gobbeeeeerrr!" Finn trotted over to him, beaming, and Valka swung down from the arm Stoick reached to her for that purpose.

"Heeeeeyyy, now, what've you kiddos been up to?"

"We caught the sheep, Uncle Gobber!"

"There were twenty-one."

"Fireworm wanted to chase them, but he couldn't because we rounded them up so fast, \_hah\_! Do you think we'll have to get a Zippelback when we're older, Uncle Gobber? Because I don't wanna share with stupid Finn, we already share Ponybutt; I want a Skrill."

"You can't have a Skrill, they're too dangerous," Finn objected.

"I CAN TOO HAVE A SKRILL!"

"But you have to catch it first, hm?" Gobber pointed out.

"Don't encourage her, Gobber," Stoick warned.

"Are you making a sword, Uncle Gobber?"

"Aye, that I am, lass!"

"My name isn't 'Lass,' it's VALKA! I'll help you make the sword, Uncle Gobber! I'll hit it with a hammer 'til it's aaaallll sharp, bam bam bam!"

"How does hitting it with a hammer make it sharp?" Finn asked in confusion, squinting at the edge of the weapon in Gobber's hands.

"Well, now, I don't know about the hammering, but if you want to help, lass, you can!"

"MY NAME IS VALKAAAAAAA!"

o.o.o.o.o

That night, Astrid tugged each of the children into her lap so she could comb their hair, as Hiccup pranced around acting out a bedtime story.

"He had us in his sights, he came zooming down the tunnel at us-!"

"It's the ice, Skrill, it's just the ice!" Valka shrieked in excitement.

"Valkaaaaaa, don't ruin the story!" Finn protested.

"He was getting closer and closer!" Hiccup continued. "Clooooooser!"

"HE BONKED HIS FACE ON THE ICE!"

"VALKA BE QUIET, DADDY WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?!"

"Toothless and I were right there! He almost had us!"

"Skrill Skrill Skrill Skrill~!"

"Did he get you, Daddy, did he get you?!"

"He opened his mouth! He roared! And then?!"

"BAM!"

"WHAT, DADDY, WHAT HAPPENED THEN?!"

"HE SMACKED FACE-FIRST INTO OUR REFLECTION IN THE ICE!!" Hiccup yelled.

"I TOLD YOU I TOLD YOU I TOLD YOOOOUUUU!" Valka screamed gleefully, as Finn cackled with laughter.

"It was just a reflection!" the boy chortled. "You and Toothless tricked the Skrill, you were standing to the side and all he bit was your reflection...!"

Later, when the kids were calmer and settled, Finn lay half-asleep in his mother's arms, and Valka was silent as her father hummed softly to her and stroked her hair. Just when Hiccup thought that Valka might have fallen asleep, she squirmed around to face him and asked in a not-sleepy-at-all tone, "Daddy, does Grandpa hate my name?"

"What?" Hiccup said, surprised.

"He never says my name," she said dolefully. "I think he doesn't like it."

"He- Valka, of course he likes your name. It was Grandma's name. We named you after her, just like we named Finn after-"

"He doesn't want me to have her name. Finn is always 'Finn,' but I'm always just 'Lass,' I'm not good enough for a name," the little girl stated, rather matter-of-factly, but then she pressed her face into Hiccup's chest and burst into tears.

"Val!" Hiccup's arm closed around her protectively, and he exchanged a wide-eyed look with his wife. "Val, hey, sweetie, no...you have a beautiful name. Grandpa loves you."

"He hates my name," she sobbed.

"Val-"

"Why don't you ask Grandpa what he thinks?" Astrid said, raising her eyebrows when Hiccup gave her a worried look.

"I ask Grandpa?" Valka sniffled.

"He...he'll tell you, Valka," Hiccup said uncertainly. "He loves your name, and he loves you."

"I'll go ask him." Valka climbed out of bed and started to march across the room. Hiccup hurried after her and scooped her up so he could carry her to the Great Hall.

They found Stoick laughing and drinking with Gobber, Spitelout and some others, who all turned to regard Hiccup and his little daughter with a mildly surprised air.

"Something keeping you up, lass?" Stoick asked in concern.

"There, see?! Grandpa, my name is Valka! That's my name, you're supposed to call me by my name!"

"That's why she can't sleep," Hiccup said meaningfully.

Stoick exchanged a glance with Gobber, then stood up and reached out for his granddaughter, but she jerked away from him and pointedly buried her face in Hiccup's neck. Stoick sighed. "All right, then. Let's go somewhere a little...quieter..."

They went back to the house and settled around the central fire. Stoick tried to draw the girl into his lap, but she refused and continued to cling defiantly to her father. "You're upset with me," Stoick observed.

"I'm not gonna talk to you anymore until you call me by my name," Valka said sulkily.

"Val," Hiccup admonished her, but Stoick raised a hand to stop him.

"Lass...Valka...listen," Stoick said gently, and she peeked up at him with a wary expression. "Your grandmother's name was Valka, too, and I loved her, very, very much. I miss her very much, and whenever I see you, I think how much she would have loved to see her wonderful granddaughter, too. Every time someone says your name, I think of her, and how I'll never be able to say her name to her again, and I...I miss her even more, and..."

"It hurts," little Valka said softly, "in your heart."

Stoick nodded, and this time when he reached out to her, the child reached back, and Hiccup shifted her into Stoick's arms. "I'm sorry, V...Val, I never meant to..." Stoick's voice was unsteady, and the girl gaped up at him in dismay.

"Grandpa, don't cry!" She spoke soothingly to him and patted the tears away from his face until they stopped coming.

"Val, little one, I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings. I didn't mean to, I-"

"You don't have to call me Val, Grandpa! You don't have to call me Valka! That's Grandma's name, not mine!"

"Val," Hiccup said, smiling in slightly exasperated amusement.

"Stop it, Daddy," she scolded, "I said not to call me that!" He shook his head and held up his hands in surrender. "It's okay, Grandpa. Don't worry, I won't make you call me the wrong name anymore."

"It's a beautiful name," Stoick murmured apologetically, kissing her hair.

"Grandma had a very good name. I'll think of a good one, too."

"You'll think of a good name?" Hiccup echoed, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes! I'm going to bed now! Grandpa, tell me a bedtime story."

"You already got a bedtime story!" Hiccup protested, but Stoick chuckled and launched into a tale about him and Gobber searching for a legendary treasure when they were teenagers.

Two days later, Valka gathered her family together and stood before them, holding her brother's hand, with their Terrible Terror tucked under her other arm. "I have an announcement to make."

"What's your announcement?" Hiccup asked indulgently, resting an arm comfortably around his wife.

"Me and Finn and Ponybutt talked and talked, and we all decided."

"Not the killer part," Finn said cryptically.

"Be quiet, Finn, it's my announcement!" Valka yelled.

"The killer part's dumb."

"MINE!"

"Valka, what's your announcement?" Hiccup said quellingly.

"THAT'S THE ANNOUNCEMENT! My name is not Valka anymore! It's not Valka, so don't call me that! Grandma is Valka, and I am Stormkiller."

Her parents and grandfather all stared at her.

"A Stormcutter ate Grandma, so I'm gonna go find it and kill it when I'm big enough. That's why my new name is Stormkiller!"

"...My dragon's name is Stormfly," Astrid finally pointed out. "It kind of sounds like you want to kill her, too."

"See?" Finn said immediately. "Told you."

His sister looked momentarily taken aback. Then her face cleared, and

she said, "Okay, well, I ride on Stormfly sometimes, so my name is Stormrider. Storm\_rider\_, okay, not killer. It's a good name!"

"...Kind of a mouthful, isn't it?" Hiccup finally ventured.

"Storm." Stoick, with a tender look on his face, held out his hand, and his granddaughter immediately scampered up to him for a hug.

"Storm for short," he murmured to her. "It's a good, strong name, little storm rider."

"Is it okay, Grandpa?" she said anxiously. "Is it okay that it's Stormrider and not Stormkiller? Will Grandma like it? She likes it better than me stealing her name, right?"

"Your grandmother loves you no matter what your name is, and I do, too," Stoick reassured her. Storm smiled and hugged him again.

Seeing the look on her husband's face, Astrid grinned and said to their son, "For the record, kiddo, everyone is totally okay with you using Uncle Finn's name."

"I know. Duh. No one cares that Daddy's named after two Hiccups," Finn said dismissively. "Are you done yet, Storm? Hurry up, the other Terrors probably got bored and flew off by now!"

"No! Make them wait," his sister demanded, hopping out of Stoick's lap and rushing for the door. "Move, Finn, hurry up!"

"You were the one making us late!"

"This is a phase, right?" Hiccup muttered as they rushed away.  
"She'll grow out of it when she gets older,  
right...?"

o.o.o

Author's Notes: There's a story idea I got, and I don't know if I'll ever get around to actually writing it, but if I do, one of the problems I was struggling to resolve was the name of Hiccup's daughter. I decided to give Hiccup entirely different kids for this story rather than the ones I already made, and when it came to the girl, I hit the exact same roadblock that I did when trying to come up with a name for Lily. \*sweatdrop\* Since the son was named after his dead great-uncle, I wanted the daughter to be named after her supposedly-dead grandmother, but that wouldn't work since Valka's actually not dead and would have a role in the story. So I had to come up with an alternate name for them to call her, and was relieved to finally settle on "Storm(rider)." I'm not really proud of it, but it's the best I could come up with. The whole naming process wouldn't fit in the story itself, so I decided to make a little prequel ficiton to explain it.

\*\*Hey guys, I have a question.\*\* Thanks to Nightquesttarja & Le'letha, I'm going to take on a 100 themes challenge for a HTTYD alternate scenario where baby Hiccup goes along with Valka when Cloudjumper carries her off. It'll be a series of 100 (theoretically, though I doubt I'll make it that far) ficitons and one-shots about Hiccup growing up in the Dragon Sanctuary and eventually returning to

Berk. My question is, \*\*would you guys want me to post that challenge series separately, or are you okay with the installments being added on to an already existing series (probably "Proper Appreciation")? Or do you not feel strongly about it one way or the other?\*\*

I fell down the other day...I've never fallen full-length like that before, as far as I can remember...hit my face, my hand, my foot, and my arm. Face and hand only hurt when I touch them, foot stopped being a problem after the first day, but my arm (which actually felt fine at first), is now really bothering me... Hurts to lift it or use it for anything. D:

There's soooo much stuff I fell behind on, messages to reply to and fics to review and more important stories that I'm actually committed to write...I'm so sorry, I've been in Survival Mode all week, I was ready for the weekend before the week even started... I'm hoping for a more productive Saturday this time. DX

#### 7. Blend In OUTTAKE: Hide

\_Blend In\_ OUTTAKE: Hide

(rough draft)

A DreamWorks' How to Train Your Dragon fanfic by Raberba girl

Summary: Hiccup brings home an abandoned dragon hatchling, whose extreme insecurity causes some humorous difficulties.

**\*\*A/N: PLEASE READ THE STUFF IN BOLDFACE FIRST, OR YOU'LL BE REALLY CONFUSED!\*\***

**\*\*I still haven't written \*\*\_\*\*Blend In\*\*\_\*\* yet, but these two scenes were writing themselves in my head so strongly that I wanted to write them for real. They're an outtake because Shadow (\*\*\_\*\*yet another\*\*\_\*\* FC, I'll explain more later) is supposed to be older when Hiccup finds him, but these scenes only work if he's still a baby. Because it's an outtake that never happens anyway, I'm just throwing in all the other elements that I like best rather than trying to make it fit the rest of my headcanon.\*\***

**\*\*I'm using Storm & Finn as Hiccup's kids because strikeSJ & Lily's drama would be too distracting/strike I want this fic to have a lighter feel, and there are additional reasons why I'm setting this more in their alternate scenario. Hiccup is 21, he's been married to Astrid for six years, the twins are 5, Stoick's still alive, and this takes place after HTTYD2, so Valka has returned to Berk.\*\***

**\*\*I left out my other FCs because they, too, would be distracting. And I don't think Hiccup knows dragon language yet, because it's kind of more fun to write when he doesn't. XD (And ftr, Shadow did not imprint on Hiccup. He hatched normally, whereas in Freefall's case, Hiccup was the first person she saw.)\*\***

Have I mentioned lately that I can be a super-confusing writer? ^^;;; I like to explore all sorts of interesting scenes and possibilities; it's less important to me whether the stories all match up in the details or not...

o.o.o

"Daddyyyy you're back you're back you're back you're back~!"

"We thought you were dead, Daddy, you're late."

Hiccup had just enough time to shut the doors of the Great Hall before his children were close enough to fling themselves at him. He laughed and knelt down to hug them. "Heeeyy, kiddos, sorry...I would have been back in time, but we ran into something...unexpected..."

Astrid, following the twins at the more sedate pace, was now within kissing range, so Hiccup got back to his feet with some difficulty and gave her a smooch. Then, with a mischievous glance at their kids, the couple wrapped their arms around each other and pretended to be swept away by passion.

"Ew, Daddy, Mommy, ew, go home and shut the door, don't do that where everyone can see you!" Finn cried, backing away with his hands curled close to his eyes as if he wanted to cover them but was too horrifyingly riveted.

His sister was bouncing in place with excitement and cheering them on instead. "Go, Daddy, go! Mommy, grab his butt!"

Hiccup and Astrid broke it off with a gasp and stared at her.  
"What?!" "Who told you-?!"

In the meantime, Toothless and Valka were happily greeting each other. As soon as Stoick got a chance, he set a hand on Hiccup's heavy pack and started to lift it away, but Hiccup hurriedly backed out of reach. "Oh, hey, Dad, um, I'm gonna, uh, hang onto this for a while longer, okay?"

Stoick frowned in confusion, and Astrid asked what was going on.

Hiccup smiled around at everyone in a mysterious way. "I'll show you guys in a minute... But let me go sit down and get something to eat first, I'm starving."

The group made their way back to where the family had been eating dinner close to one of the fires, moving slowly because of how much they were talking. When they did finally reach the table, Hiccup greeted Gobber, removed the pack from his back with a relieved groan, then sat down with his legs positioned close to it in a protective way. Astrid set a plate of food in front of him, and Stoick started to pour him a mug of ale before Finn insisted on doing it.

"You gonna pour me a drink, Finn?" Hiccup chuckled.

"I can do it," Finn said. He handled the heavy pitcher very carefully, practically hugging it in an effort to keep it steady.

"DON'T SPILL IT, FINN!" Storm hollered in his ear. Finn's face twisted with annoyance; the stream of liquid wavered, but stayed within the confines of the mug. As soon as Finn had successfully

finished pouring his father's drink, he whirled around and hurled the rest of the ale at his sister. Storm screeched with indignation as the rest of the adults burst into laughter - all but Hiccup, who leaned down to pat his pack and whisper soothingly to it. Astrid gave him a strange look.

For a while, there was some lively conversation as Hiccup ate and the others finished their after-dinner drinks. At last, Valka could wait no longer, and leaned over to say, "Hiccup, when are you going to show us what you brought home?" In answer to his surprised look, she smiled and said, "Cloudjumper can smell him, and Toothless told me what you two were up to while you were gone. I'd really like to see him, please."

"See who?" the kids clamored.

Hiccup smiled nervously. "Okay, guys, but, um, we have to be really careful, okay? You have to be quiet, and move slowly. And Storm, Finn? Don't jump at him. He's really, really shy, and you'll scare him if you're loud or if you get too close, okay? Can you please stay over there by your mom?"

"Is there a baby dragon in there?!" Finn asked in excitement.

Hiccup smiled again, then carefully lugged his pack farther away from the group and opened it. He made a face at the smell.

"Did it poop?! Did it poop in there, Daddy?!" Storm asked eagerly.

"He's a baby, Storm. He's been pooping and peeing in there all the way home." Then, at his mother's look, "I've been cleaning it out every time he does it, Mom! But it still smells, you know." The next remark was cooed at whatever was inside the pack. "Doesn't it, huh~? Mr. Smelly?"

Toothless came over to rejoin his partner. Stoick and Astrid had to keep firm hold of the excited children as Hiccup reached inside his pack. "Okay...okay, easy there, it's time to come out..." A sharp, frantic whimpering started up inside the pack, and Valka made a 'my heart is shredding' face. "Hey, hey, hey, ssshhh, Shadow, there's no one scary out here, all right? It's just me, little guy, me and Toothless, we're right here, it's okay...my family's really, really nice, they can be kind of noisy but they won't touch you, I promise, they just want to look-"

As Hiccup spoke, he had been trying to dig the hatchling out of his pack, and was apparently having trouble. Both arms were now in as far as they would go. Astrid came over to help, but just as she got close, there was one last cry from the baby dragon - then a sudden struggle, as Hiccup exclaimed in surprise and jerked away. Toothless went alert and frustrated with helpless concern.

"Hiccup, what's happening?" both his parents demanded, and Storm shrieked, "Is it EATING you, Daddy?!" and Finn yelled frantically, "Get away from it, Daddy, get away!"

"Everyone be quiet!" Hiccup yelled. The cornered hatchling had dived at his neckline and was now squirming mostly inside his tunic, its white-scaled legs kicking frantically to propel it deeper in, and its

tail hitting him in the face. Hiccup lost his balance and would have fallen to the floor if Toothless hadn't hurried to support him. Astrid was yelling and pulling at his clothes and he was trying to stop her, and by the time he finally got everyone to shut up, he was sprawled against Toothless with his arms wrapped protectively around the lumpy bulge over his belly. The hatchling was shivering and whimpering with terror against his bare skin, the end of its white tail poking out from under his tunic.

The fins on that tail looked very familiar. "It's a NIGHT FURY!" Storm cried in excitement.

"No it's not, it's white, dummy," Finn said. "All Night Furies are dark."

Hiccup grinned at them. "You're both right. Yes, Storm, it's a baby Night Fury; and yes, Finn, all the Furies we've seen so far have been dark - this one is an exception." He peered down at the hatchling hiding in his tunic. "I think there's something wrong with him...his whole body is white, and we found him alone and starving, no one is taking care of him. And his eyes are completely red, like Snowflake's. I've never seen any other dragon with eyes like that; or who's completely white, for that matter."

"Whispering Deaths are supposed to be dark," Finn suddenly said.  
"Maybe there's something wrong with Snowflake, too."

"Snowflake's a Screaming Death, Finn, not a Whispering Death!"  
Storm insisted.

"Screaming Deaths are a subspecies of Whispering Death," Astrid said.  
"Hiccup, what in the world is going on? You brought home an orphaned defective Night Fury?"

"Uh...yeah, pretty much." Astrid lifted Hiccup's collar and peered into the gap. They both smiled at what they saw. Then Valka came over to look, followed quickly by the kids, and soon Hiccup was trying not to sigh as his entire family crowded around to take turns staring inside his tunic. The hatchling's eyes were hidden, since its face was jammed against Hiccup's hip and it was covering its head with a paw.

"Okay, so, yeah, I've had a pretty long day, and I'm kind of tired, and I'd like to get Shadow home and settled before he starts peeing in my tunic, sooooo, you think everyone could back off now...?"

Of course the whole family came along with him, chattering in excitement. Hiccup walked slowly, cradling the hatchling, feeling like it was getting heavier and heavier with every step.

"You want me to carry him, babe?" Astrid asked when he stumbled again.

"I think it's more a question of him letting anyone but me carry him, and I'm 99% sure the answer is no."

They tried anyway, but as soon as little Shadow started up his panicked cries, Astrid backed off and Hiccup cuddled him soothingly. "Hey, hey, little guy, it's all right, we just wanted to try, but if you don't like it then we don't have to, it's okay, I can keep

carrying you...c'mon, sshhh..."

Storm set her hands on the tunic-covered hatchling. "It's okay, be quiet, you big baby! No one's hurting you!"

"Don't yell at him, Storm, you're scaring him," Finn said, pushing her away. Which started a tussle until Stoick hoisted Storm up onto his shoulders and Astrid pulled up Finn to carry him piggyback. Even then, the children continued arguing from their respective perches.

"Dad? Gobber?" Hiccup asked in between, "Do you think you guys could find a slab of rock we could use for Shadow's bed? Toothless isn't going to want to share his."

"I'll see what we can find."

"Thanks."

When they got to the house, Hiccup headed for his own bed, having a vague idea of wanting to be somewhere comfortable where he could try to extricate the terrified baby dragon. He was tired, and stumbled yet again when he got close to the bed, and was just barely able to catch himself.

Which was when he found himself in a predicament. Shadow was heavy enough and Hiccup was tired enough that if he gave in to gravity and let the hatchling rest on the bed, then Hiccup wouldn't be able to get up again. And with all of Shadow's weight centered at Hiccup's belly, he didn't have the strength to shift to the side, either, at least not without hurting himself.

"Uh...Astrid?" He felt ridiculous, bent over in an awkward and uncomfortable position, one hand supporting Shadow and the other hand braced against the bed. "This is going to sound kind of stupid, but can you kind of, like, push me over onto my back?"

"What?"

He could hear the confused amusement in her voice. "Yeah, I know, but just please push me over, okay? This is awkward, and I can't-"

She tried. He landed more on his side than his back, but his attempts to maneuver the hatchling simply made Shadow frantically latch onto him. "...O-kay."

"Are we trying to get him out of your tunic?" Astrid asked.

"Yes... Okay, um, here, let's get my belt off first, it's killing me-" They both struggled with it. Shadow's squirming had pulled half of Hiccup's tunic free of his belt, but the hatchling's weight was straining the portion of fabric that was still tucked in, pulling the belt taut and making it harder to unbuckle. They both grunted in relief when Astrid was finally able to pull it away and drop it on the floor.

"Okay...okay, so, I guess we'll try to pull him out from below-" He shifted a little to make room for Astrid as she climbed onto the bed. "Or, no, wait-"

The couple stared at each other for a minute. By this time, Hiccup was lying on his back with his knees bent, trying to prop himself up on his elbows, and Astrid had knelt between his legs, which was the best angle for her to reach up under his tunic. It looked so much like she was helping him give birth that they both burst into laughter. As did Valka, who'd been standing nearby with a blanket for a while but had been too busy being amused to actually hand it over. And the rest of the family, who were standing around grinning as they watched.

"Okay," Hiccup gasped, trying to get his exasperated amusement under control, "okay, Mom, hey, blanket please?"

"The hatchling might be more at ease if he's better hidden," Valka agreed, draping the blanket over Hiccup's stomach and legs, and Astrid's arms.

"We should try this again sometime, but without the dragon," Astrid murmured, running her hands along her husband's thighs now that no one could see.

Not that the adults couldn't guess, when Hiccup made a high-pitched yelp as she took gentle hold of him and squeezed. "\_Astrid\_! L-Let's focus here, okay, look, he's probably going to go nuts if you try to touch him, so, here, you push up my tunic, and I'll see if I can pull him out..."

Storm climbed up beside Hiccup's head and chanted encouragingly, "Push, Daddy, push! Puuuush!"

"I'm not giving birth, Storm!"

She giggled and continued mischievously, "Me and Finn are getting a new baby brother~?"

"Hush, you," Hiccup grumbled. Then he froze, at almost the same moment Astrid shrieked and jerked her hands out from under the blanket.

"What happened?!"

"What happened is I just got peed on," Hiccup sighed.

"Eeewww!" Storm exclaimed, and Finn wrinkled his nose.

Hiccup grinned at them. "You know, both of you used to pee on me when you were babies, too."

"Ew!"

"No we didn't!"

Valka offered to take Astrid's place, but the younger woman shook her head and smiled a little as she reached for Hiccup's tunic again. "This is ridiculous."

"This is beyond ridiculous!" Hiccup whined.

When it became obvious that Shadow absolutely refused to be

relocated, Gobber playfully suggested doing a C-section.

"Very funny. But I guess we can cut up my tunic if we really have to, argh..."

He did end up having to sacrifice his tunic. Shadow cried the whole time, but didn't cling as tightly when the blanket continued to shield him from sight and no one was pulling at him. Hiccup was eventually able to maneuver himself free, leaving the hatchling behind as he rolled off the edge of the bed onto the floor. Everyone cheered.

"Ssshhh!" Valka ordered. "The little one's scared to death already, don't roar like that!"

Astrid helped her husband to his feet, and he stood wearily in his ruined tunic.

"A healthy baby boy," Gobber laughed, clapping him on the back.  
"Congratulations!"

"You did well bringing him into the world, I'm so proud of you," Stoick contributed with a twinkle in his eye.

"The pregnant joke is over," Hiccup groaned. "And we're not done yet, we need to get him off my bed."

Stoick leaned over to pick up the lump under the blanket, but paused when the little dragon immediately started making its yelping whimpers again.

"Seriously?!?" Hiccup cried at the hatchling. "You can smell him even through the blanket?!"

"I'm afraid so, son," Valka said, patting him on the back.

"Aaarrggghh, I'm too tired for this..." Hiccup stooped to put his arms around Shadow, took a breath, then heaved upward and struggled to carry the blanket-wrapped hatchling over to the smaller slab of rock that had been set beside Toothless's. The older Night Fury was curled up, seemingly asleep, until he cracked open one eye and glared suspiciously at the hatchling as it was laid down nearby.

Hiccup stood back up again and shook out his arms. "There. Wow. Okay. That was a lot more labor-intensive than I expected it to be—" He looked over at his wife when he heard her snigger.

"What?"

"Labor," she repeated, and laughed when he facepalmed.

o.o.o.o.o

Hiccup almost felt like the parent of a newborn all over again. Shadow seemed to be all right being left alone for twenty or thirty minutes at a time, but after too long, he would start crying for Hiccup. He was terrified of all humans except for Hiccup and (eventually) Valka and (even more eventually) Finn, and spent most of his time hiding in whatever nooks and crannies would fit him. He

seemed to favor dark, shadowed places where he stood out like a sore thumb, despite Finn's efforts to teach him to camouflage himself in lighter-colored environments.

"Why'd you name him 'Shadow,' Daddy? He's like the opposite of a shadow."

"I was going to name him 'Cloud,' but then figured it might get too confusing with him and Cloudjumper. Maybe a blending-in sort of name will help him to blend in for real?"

"That's silly, Daddy."

The problem was that Hiccup was Berk's chief now, and he couldn't keep hiking back to the house every half hour. It would be better if Shadow came along with him on his rounds, but when the timid little dragon would shriek or dash into hiding or cry or practically knock over Hiccup in his desperation to be comforted every time a human being got too close or too loud...

"We can't keep doing this, little guy," Hiccup sighed, petting the young Night Fury as Shadow tried to burrow into his chest. They were sitting under a pier, at the opposite end from the fishing boats Hiccup was supposed to be overseeing. "Does it reeeeaaallly have to be me all the time, huh? Can't you let Mom or Finn or any of the dragons baby-sit you for even a few hours? ...No? No, that is not acceptable?"

Shadow whimpered plaintively.

"Okay, well...I'm Hiccup the Awesome, I'm sure I'll think of something." Hiccup rested his chin on Shadow's head and wondered how in the world to fix this problem.

The solution turned out to be surprisingly simple. It started as a joke, but Hiccup later figured there wouldn't be any harm in trying it out.

He made a cloak for the little dragon out of heavy black fabric. Most of the hood, also black, was made of a different material, woven loosely enough for Shadow to be able to see through. When he was wearing the garment, the only parts of him that could be seen were the end of his tail, flashes of his paws as he walked, and (if you were willing to put your head very low to the ground) a bit of his neck and chest.

Hiccup, surprised by how easily Shadow allowed himself to be dressed for the first time (most dragons would have had to be bribed with lots and lots of fish, at the least), sat back and watched the little dragon's reaction. At first, there didn't seem to be any, which was encouraging. Shadow simply sat there for a while, looking like a sentient mound of cloth. Then he stood up and took a few steps, closing the gap between himself and Hiccup, and stretched out his neck to sniff at the man. He stepped into Hiccup's lap, clumsily because of the edges of the cloak his paws kept catching in, settled down, and started to purr for the first time.

"You like it, huh?" Hiccup said in relief, smiling as he petted the cloaked dragon. "You like it? It doesn't bother you?" Shadow rested his head on Hiccup's knee in contentment. "All right, well, so far so

good. Let's see how you do with the \_scary people\_ outside, huh?" Hiccup gently nudged Shadow out of his lap and stood up. He backed away toward the door, opened it, and kept backing until he was standing in sunlight.

Shadow followed him. The little Night Fury toddled right up to him, his stance more confident than Hiccup had ever seen it.

"It's not so bad out here, huh? Well then, let's see how you do when I \*gasp\* \_go over to the forge and talk to Gobber\_!" He turned and marched away, stealing glances over his shoulder as he went.

Shadow scrambled after him, though the difference was marked. Whereas before, he would have been shrilly barking his distress, and frantically slinking low to the ground, with his wings rigid in terror, now he was simply hurrying like any normal child who wanted to catch up to his daddy.

"Doing good, Shadow! Come on, keep it up!"

In the forge, Gobber had laid out several small engraved pieces on the counter and was telling something to the young twins, who were hanging onto his every word. At Hiccup's entrance, Gobber glanced over, raised his eyebrows, and exclaimed, "What is \_that\_?"

"It's Shadow!" Finn cried in delight, hopping to the floor and running over to the young dragon. He stopped a respectful distance away and crouched down to get a better look. Shadow hurriedly slipped behind Hiccup's legs, but peered out at Finn with more cautious curiosity than his usual stressed-out fear when forced to confront anyone outside the house.

"He got caught in a blanket!" Storm laughed, going to pull the cloak away.

Hiccup caught her in time. "Storm, no, that's his cloak. I made it for him so he'll feel better when he's outside - look how good he's been so far! All these people around, and he hasn't even started crying yet!"

"That's amazing," Finn breathed. He flattened himself completely to the ground, making himself as nonthreatening as possible, before squirming a little closer and stretching out his hand. "Hey, Shadow," he crooned. "Hey~ there. Can I say hello? Hello, Shadow?"

Shadow crept close and lowered his hooded head to sniff at Finn's fingers.

"He's not scared anymore, Daddy!" Storm exclaimed.

"That's right. He's got his own portable hiding place now - everywhere he goes, he'll think that no one can see him."

Storm burst into laughter. "Hey, Shadow!" she called, crouching down, "You silly dragon, \_everyone\_ can see you!"

"Ssshh, Storm, don't tell him that!" Hiccup admonished. "He feels \_safe\_ now. He thinks he's hiding. If he knew that people can see him, he'd get scared and clingy and start crying again. This way, I can actually do my job and take care of him at the same

time."

"Ohhhh." Storm crouched down again. "Hey, Shadow! NOBODY CAN SEE YOU! We have noooooooo idea where you are, ha ha!"

"Good boy, Shadow," Finn murmured, stroking the dragon's hood. "Good boy."

o.o.o

Author's Notes: Sorry for those two T-rated moments...I don't trust my own judgment, I don't know if either of them was going too far or not. (Ftr, Storm doesn't understand all the connotations of what she said. She's at the age where butts are funny, and has a vague idea that her parents are allowed to touch each other's.)

I should be writing this A/N for the real Blend In story, not this outtake, but whatever. Shadow is an FC I came up with when I saw yet another Night Fury Mary Sue on DeviantArt, scoffed at how so many Fury Sues are unrealistic colors, then wondered what it actually would be like for a white Night Fury in a realistic canon setting. He'd have to be an albino, and he would be at a big disadvantage because he can't blend into the night sky like he's supposed to. His hunting skills would probably suffer as a result, and it's possible that he might starve without human intervention. Cue Hiccup! ^^

In Norse culture, they would have several, usually related families sharing a household (three generation families were rare), but their houses were also designed differently than the houses on Berk. I'm compromising by having them add a room or two downstairs for Hiccup & Astrid, and the kids taking the loft room.

I know the term "C-section" is anachronistic, and that Viking women probably gave birth squatting rather than lying down, but you're not gonna call me out on it, are you...?

I went through about ten names for this albino Fury FC before finally settling on "Cloud" - then remembered, after writing about 75% of this fic, that it's too close to Cloudjumper's name. \*facepalm\* I don't like "Shadow" quite as much, but, again, it was the best I could come up with. :/

I'm pretty sure that I was influenced in some places by Robin McKinley's Dragonhaven. Which, when I think about it, is probably my favorite dragon book ever. The main character's narration style can be tiresome, but I'm willing to put up with it because I so much love the way McKinley portrays dragons and how they fit into modern life, and how thoroughly she explored the concept.

I was trying to figure out whether "had dove" or "had dived" is correct. I finally found out that both are correct (I think), it apparently depends on the region? \*sweatdrop\* English is a ridiculous language...

I have a new appreciation for human Hiccup, how dang cooperative and easy to write he is compared to hybrid Hiccup! X'D

End  
file.